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# Reader's Digest

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MAY 2012

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**HELICOPTER RESCUE!**

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**BABA AMTE'S LEGACY OF LOVE**

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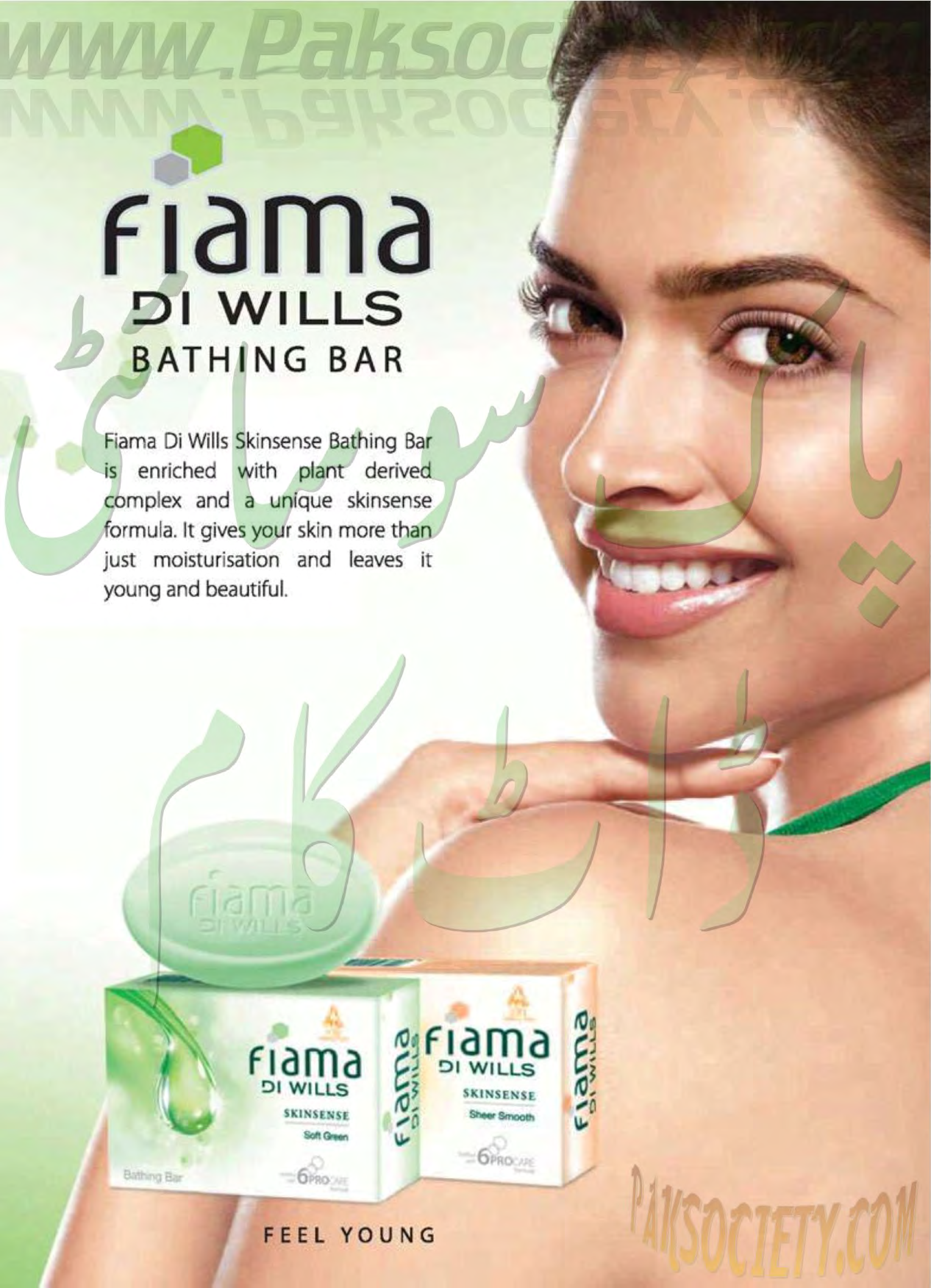

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# From the Editor

## You May Be Normal

**Ever been in a situation** where you meet an acquaintance who remembers you, your name and much more. You just can't recall his name, but you have to introduce him to your wife right there? Happens all the time. So I introduce my wife to him and being used to this situation, she says she didn't catch his name the first time, so that he would naturally repeat it. Phew!

But that's not the point. Does this mean I'm nuts or that my brain isn't functioning right? Find out from our cover story "Are You Normal or Nuts?" where you can get verdicts on more such common off-brained situations that we all experience.

In 2005, two colleagues and I went over and met Baba Amte, who created Anandwan, the refuge for innumerable leprosy patients and handicapped people, not far from Nagpur. We were amazed by this sprawling parallel universe with its thousands of residents leading productive lives they wouldn't otherwise have enjoyed. Baba Amte, then 90, we were told, would give us only a 15-minute interview in the afternoon since he was not well enough to speak for any longer. We met him briefly that morning and he told us to come back. He looked so frail that Ashok Mahadevan, who was then the Digest's Editor, decided that we must be kind and call off the interview. Moreover, no good Digest interview is possible in 15 minutes. Later, after debating it over lunch, we decided to go back for those 15 minutes anyway. Only problem: Baba became so enthusiastic that he went on for an hour, till *we* had to stop. That's the story of Baba's life—he'd never stop helping others. Recently, four years after Baba passed away, Ashok went back to Anandwan to do a longer story (page 136) on Baba's enduring legacy and how his children and grandkids are carrying on his great work.

May 13th is Mother's Day and we have yet another inspiration-filled article on page 74: "Mom Advice."

Mohan Sivanand

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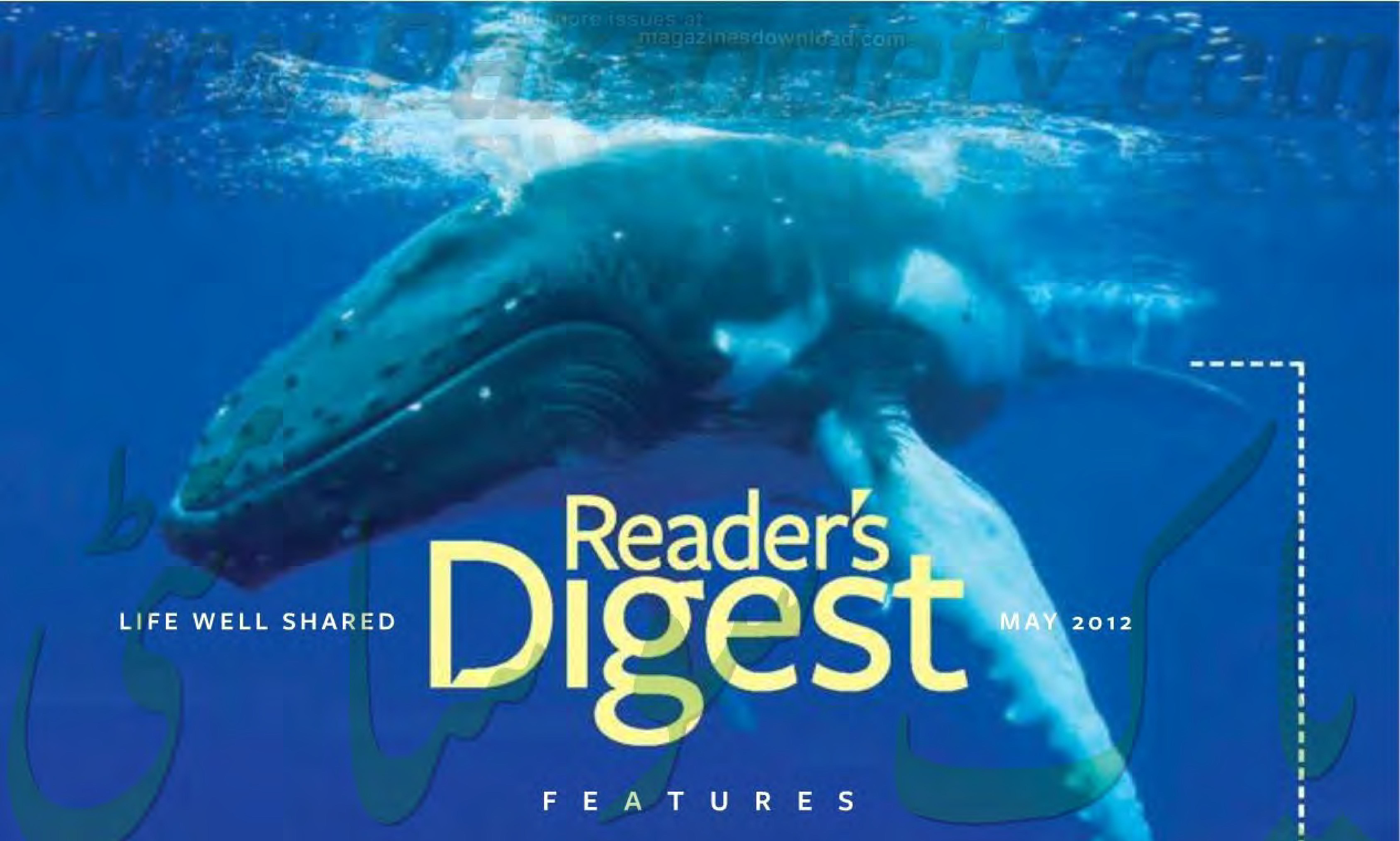

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LIFE WELL SHARED MAY 2012

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For six decades this sanctuary for some of society's outcasts has restored joy and dignity to so many.

*On the cover

COVER ILLUSTRATION: EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM; (WHALE) ISTOCKPHOTO



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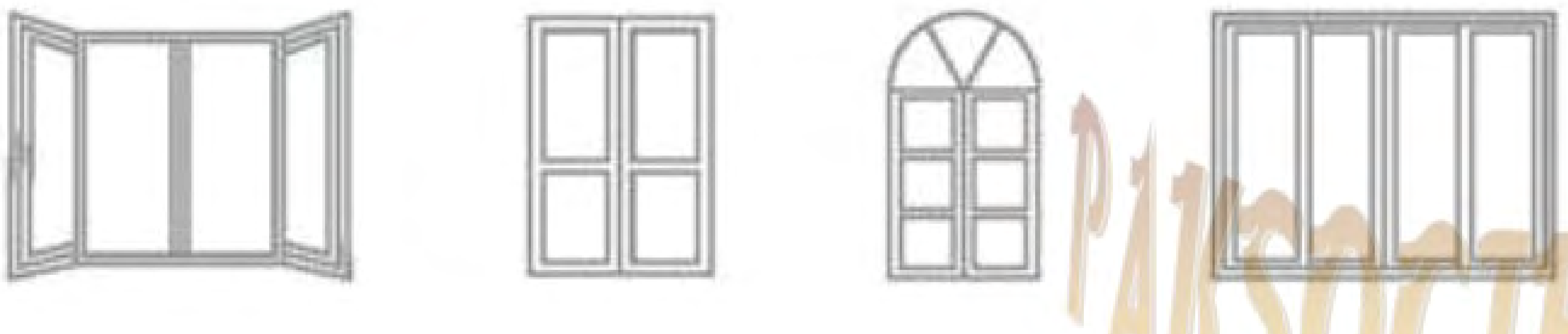

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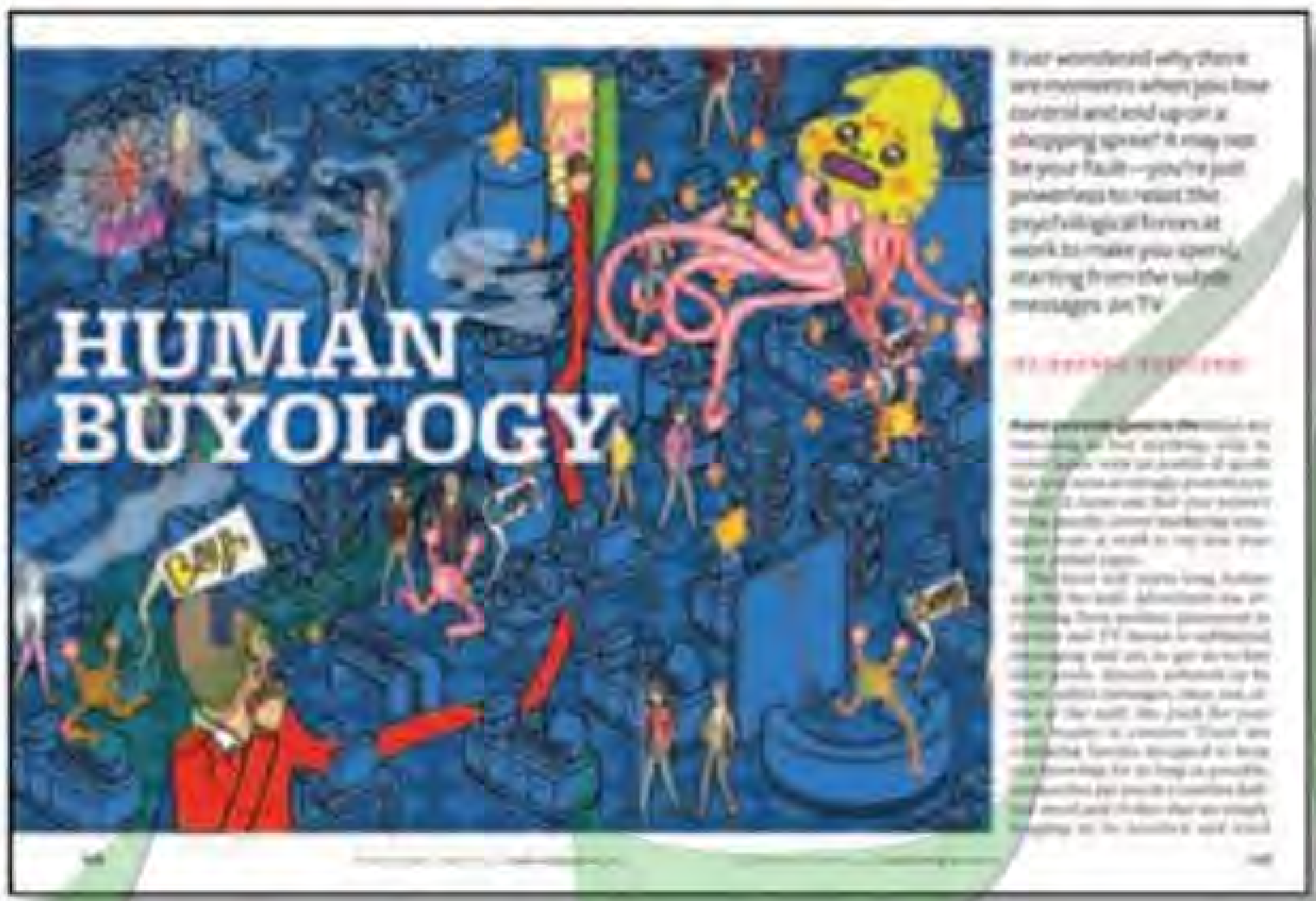
# React

LETTERS FROM READERS

## Buy Bug

I enquired about the prices of some garments at a reputed shop [Human Buyology, March]. A week later I saw an advertisement saying they had slashed all prices by 10 to 25 percent. Back there again, I was shocked to learn they'd actually raised prices 25 percent before offering the discount. Since then I've not been fooled by any sale.

*Kavitha Srikanth,* Mumbai




**I always blamed myself** for buying what I didn't need but never realized the "buyology" traps. If only this article was published earlier, I'd have saved big money.

*Uzma Khan,* New Delhi

Just as the Editor's father did, I advise my sons not to buy things I don't need. Yet they wheedle me into shopping malls to buy me clothes, saying that they are only repaying me. However, I have struck a balance between the love of my sons and a resultant overflowing wardrobe: I donate the good, older clothes. We should give to charity the things we would ourselves use and not what we'd discard.

*C.P. Srinivasan,* Chennai

I commend Rachel Sullivan on her article. However, I am not convinced that we are powerless to resist the psychological forces at work to make us part with our hard-earned cash.

Before we reach for our wallets, it helps to ask ourselves, "Do I really need this or do I just want this?"

*Tasha Poschor,* via e-mail

Your advice prompted me to refuse one of the Digest's own promotional offers. In the words of Sir M. Vishweshwaraiah, "If you buy what you do not need, you need what you cannot buy."

*K.V.S. Rao,* via e-mail

## Music Therapy

We must conduct music therapy research in order to establish and utilize the possibilities of Hindustani and Carnatic music as well [Take



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One Dose of Bach Twice, March]. If they too work like Bach, it will be a boon to all.

*Stanley Joseph,* Mavelikkara, Kerala

I suggested to a friend's father that he listen to Bach and Vivaldi at night with the headphones on. He has since avoided his sleeping pills and it's been weeks of good sleep for him. The only problem: someone needs to turn off the music!

*Shantanu Singh,* Jaipur

*Try a music system with a sleep-timer, or attach a timer switch device at the plug-point. —Eds.*

## Unfair Adventure?

Dr Gowri Yale was outraged by the real-life drama "In the Jaws of a Polar Bear" [October]. You even gave her January's Best Letter prize for pointing out that "an innocent animal was killed all because two humans wanted to be adventurous in its habitat." But the two young men were not on a hunting expedition. If such adventure is taboo, then a lot of famous explorers would not have been heroes. The poor, hungry bear was trying to kill and eat an adventurous young man whose friend had to kill the bear. Must all adventure be banned since it might result in the death of animals?

*Suryanarayana Ch.V.,* Secunderabad

*Good question, and for that, Mr Suryanarayana gets our Best Letter Prize. —Eds.*

## Helping Hands

The Raos did [White-Coat Dreams, My Story, March] what we as humans should all be doing. And the humble attitude with which Hemavathi wrote her story is heartwarming. An educator, I always look for inspiring stories to share with my students, hoping that at least one of them would empathize with less fortunate people.

*Sriekala Nair,* Navi Mumbai, Mah.

Hemavathi's success is the result of her determination and the continuing support and love from her guardian angels, the Raos. Her story should inspire other youngsters to persevere hard in their quest to realize their dreams.

*Rebecca Mao,* Chennai

For a girl of modest origins who will soon get a doctorate, no god could have made this transformation, which the kind-hearted Raos managed. *P.G. Rajan,* Bangalore

## The Touch of Life

The magical experience of a mother whose touch brought back life is mind-blowing [The Baby Who Was Loved Back to Life, March]. Shouldn't we go back to our traditional ways of bringing up children by adding more love, hugs, care and warmth? *Uma H.R.,* Bangalore

No drug was able to revive Jamie, but the affection and faith of his mother did it. Medical science



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Yet another health book. I'm sure it will be different and useful, but having seen the cycle—promotion, acceptance, and then debunking—of most health theories and fads, I'm reminded of Mark Twain's words: "Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint."

*Phiroze B. Javeri,* Mumbai

## Breathtaking Ladakh

Colonel Dr M. Mohan Kumar's mention of Leh-Ladakh [Off Base, March 2012] took me back to the mid-1970s when I served as Ladakh's district superintendent of police for a similar "two years" and more. There, our administrative tours gave us the endurance of rally drivers. With no commercial flights, the sole lifeline in winter, when Srinagar gets cut off, was an IAF plane. The sub-zero temperatures froze the Indus along its banks. Ladakh had many challenges and yet a spell-binding charisma of its own. *A.C. Chaturvedi,* Jammu

## Living Healthy

The checklist in "How to Live to Be a Hundred" was loud and clear [Health... the RD Version, March]. Sadly, we notice our bodies only after we turn 40 or more, by which time the damage is done. But now I am geared up to lead a healthy future. I have started jogging, yoga, catching up with old friends, browsing through novels and, yes, sleeping well. The cobwebs in my head seem to have disappeared and I don't lose patience as before.

*Madhavi Nair,* Kalyan, Mah.

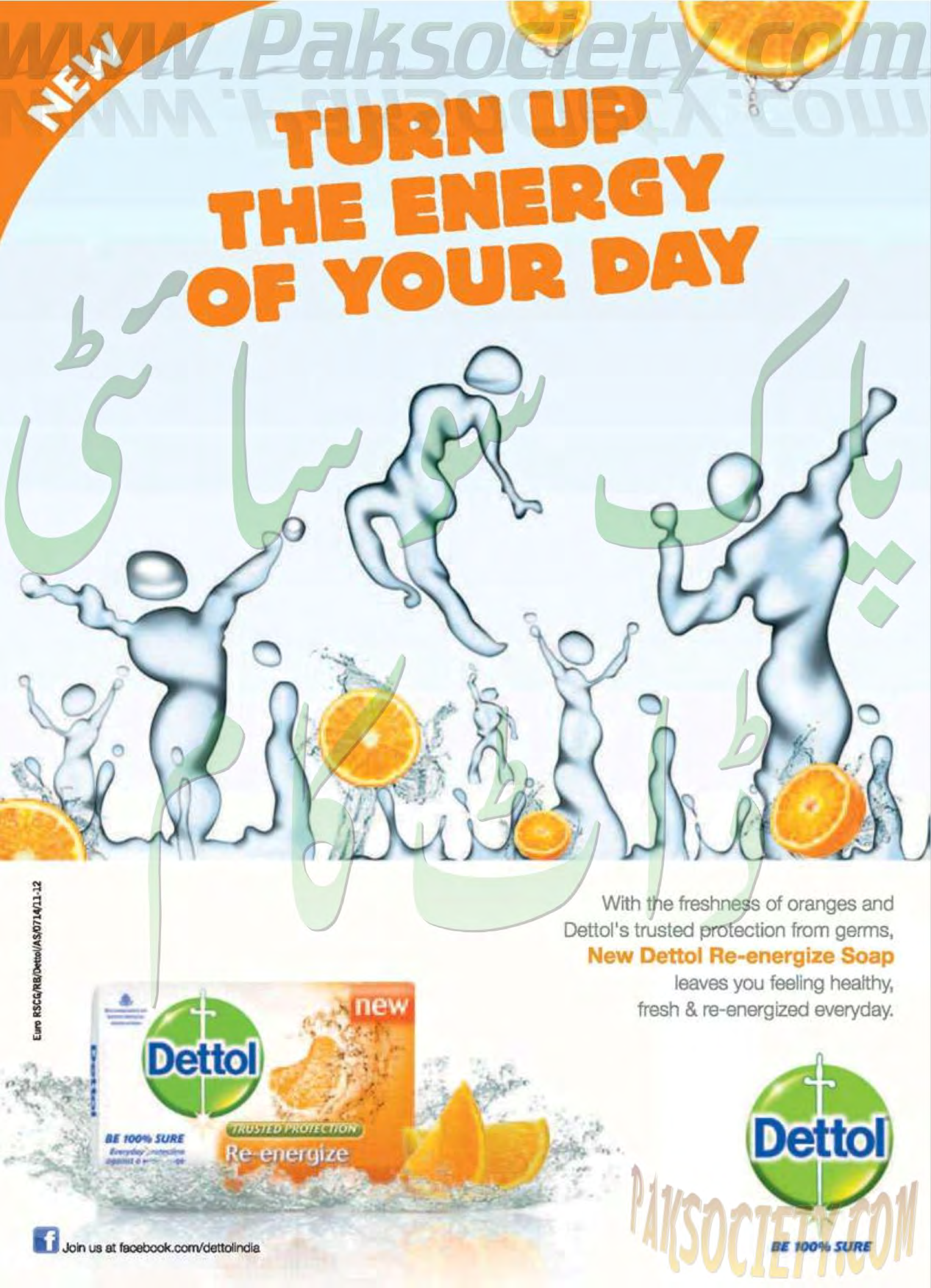
It is indeed true that 50 percent of all doctors graduate at the bottom of their MBBS class. I would like to say further that almost all of them do

## Unsafe Bikers

Do we believe that we, too, are blessed [Outrageous! February] with nine lives? How else could you explain three or more people riding a motorbike meant for two, that too, without helmets? Also, I've seen two-wheelers being used to carry unmanageable quantities and varieties of things—from long rods to bulky sacks—leaving barely any space for the rider to even keep his feet. *D.B.N. Murthy,* Bangalore

The author of the best letter, chosen by the editors, will receive a prize: The Reader's Digest book ***How to Write and Speak Better*** priced at ₹1099.

**Post opinions to the Editorial address, or e-mail: editor.india@rd.com (no attachments please). Include your phone number and address. Letters may be condensed and edited for clarity.**

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# Outrageous!

AN OPEN PHOTO-EDITORIAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA GROUP © BCCL

Can only tall girls be beautiful? No, especially in our country, where the overwhelming majority of women are not "tall" at all—and may yet be both beautiful and intelligent. For several years, there was a five-foot-six-inch minimum height requirement to enter a Miss India contest. Even after that tall rule was abolished recently, the judges seem to consider or award only very tall women.

This obvious bias could make even young Indian girls of normal height feel small, since these much-watched contests can condition their impressionable minds. Most of the participants and winners are five-foot-nine or thereabout! Just *where* are all the real Indian girls?

After the last Femina Miss India contest, Julia Morley, co-chairperson of the Miss World pageant, was asked about it. "You tell me," Morley replied. "I am baffled to see so many tall women in the contest and I have often wondered [about] that myself. When I go to Korea, or any other part of Asia, I don't see too many tall women. I haven't got an answer to that myself yet."

When Reader's Digest contacted the company that manages the Miss India events, we were told by a spokesperson that the "five-foot-six minimum height rule *may or may not* be reintroduced next year."

**Send us ideas for Outrageous! on something we need to think about or change. We pay ₹3000 for your write-up.**



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FOR EVERYDAY HEROES

# CONTENTMENT

## IS STARTING YOUR CHILD'S DAY WITH A HANDFUL OF GOODNESS

The daily morning rush of getting your kids ready, packing their school-bags and getting them to complete their breakfast can get any mother hassled. Peace of mind comes from giving your kids the right start to the day and ensuring they have an energetic and fun-filled day. With just a handful of almonds in the morning, you can rest assured that your kids will face the day's challenges head-on.

A healthy helping of almonds every morning makes for a delicious start to the day. Bursting with crunchy goodness, almonds make a versatile addition to your kids' morning diet. They can be used dry, soaked, whole, sliced, slivered and even as part of healthy shakes. With so many different ways of using almonds, you can easily make a variety of exciting dishes and keep things interesting for your fussy little eaters.

**Almonds, perfect partners for Moms**

As a mom, you make sure that whatever your kids eat makes them big, strong and healthy. Almonds, among tree nuts, contain the highest amount of protein. Just a handful of almonds provides an ideal combination of proteins and unsaturated fats to keep their energy levels up throughout the day. Filled with fibre, essential minerals, Vitamin E and rich in calcium, almonds ensure your kids start the day with a skip in their step and a smile on their faces.

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# PREVENT SWINE FLU

**There have been cases of swine flu reported across India. Protect your family anytime, anywhere by using hand sanitizers.**

Picture this scenario: Every day children pick up scores of germs when they travel to school by bus, play in the mud or handle books. Each time they munch on a chocolate or bite into a biscuit held with unwashed hands, they consume numerous bacteria, making it a sure-shot recipe for illness.

Swine Flu is also spread through hand-to-hand contact, a reason why school going children often catch the bug from friends. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) states that the human influenza virus can survive on surfaces for up to eight hours, making people susceptible to catching it each time they touch the infected object.

Often, children contract germs in the absence of parental supervision or due to the sheer lack of a handwash and water to wash their hands with. In such situations, a sanitizer becomes a necessity. If soap and water are not available it is recommended to use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, such as Lifebuoy.

School researchers concluded that hand sanitizing is more effective against fighting the common cold than hand washing: *(Source: "Research shows hand sanitizers more effective against cold", University of Virginia Cavalier Daily, March 26, 2010. Retrieved 27-04-2007).*

## SANITIZERS— BREAKING SOME COMMON MYTHS

- **Do Sanitizers Work?**

Alcohol-based sanitizers, including Lifebuoy, kill both pathogenic (disease causing) microorganisms, including antibiotic resistant bacteria and TB bacteria. It also has high viricidal activity against various kinds of viruses, including enveloped viruses such as the flu virus, the common cold virus.

In fact, alcohol-based sanitizers are extensively used in the hospital environment as an alternative to antiseptic soaps. Hands must be disinfected before any surgical procedure by hand washing with mild soap, if hands are visibly dirty, and then hand-rubbing with a sanitizer.

- **Are they Safe to use at home/away from home?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends using hand sanitizer with children to promote good hygiene, and furthermore recommends parents pack hand sanitizer for their children when traveling, to avoid their contracting disease from dirty hands. The stripping away of lipids from the surface of the hands by a sanitizer, which is a common concern, is in fact lesser than when washing with detergents, such as commonly used hand soaps.

However, if ingested, sanitizers are harmful for children and parents must take care to teach the child proper usage and avoid allowing very young children to use them without supervision.

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# Right Here Right Now

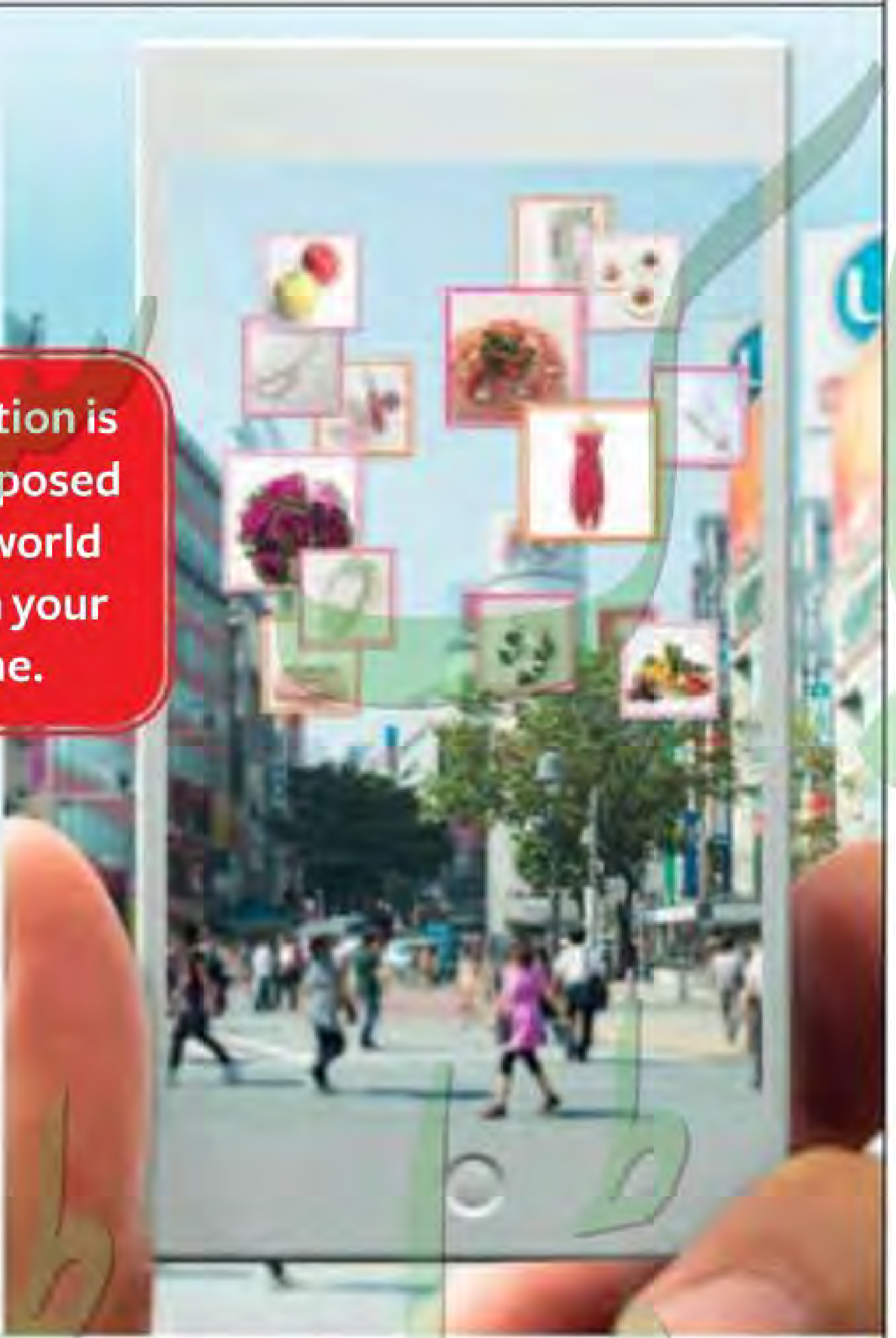
BY HAZEL FLYNN

NEED TO KNOW

## Augmented reality

Forget old-hat virtual reality (VR), the new phenomenon you need to know about is augmented reality (AR). In VR, you're absorbed in a digital creation; with AR, digital data is "layered" onto the real world. You're most likely to experience it via a smartphone. Download the Dutch Layar browser app and you can stand on an Amsterdam street and point your phone in any direction. The screen will show you geo-located points of interest such as houses to buy, bars and more. In Tokyo, scan the façade of the N Building and the phone screen shows what's sold inside, and offers you special deals. It lends new meaning to "get real."

**Information is superimposed on the world through your phone.**



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO … THE INTERROBANG?

## The exclam question

It's not often anything can be described as "the next big thing in punctuation," but for a few years, the interrobang was just that. The symbol, which combines a question mark and an exclamation mark, was created in 1962 by US adman Martin Speckter to express, as he put it, "incredulity." In other words, it was "WTF" for the pre-digital generation. For a while it looked like the interrobang might really take off, with some typewriters featuring it, but it faded from use. Is it dead? Not quite: several font sets still retain it (see‽), and the State Library of New South Wales, Australia, even gave it a boost by using it as their new logo in 2010.

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# Right Here Right Now

**FOR REAL?**

## Whack a cake

A real hit at any party: serve with a mallet, then duck.

**Piñata cakes:** Great new concept to spark up a celebration or idiotic fad? The idea is that rather than carefully cut into their cake, the guest of honour smashes it with a mallet. What appears to be an ordinary cake is then revealed as a chocolate shell full of confectionery. Preschoolers love it—no surprises there. But is it really something you want to see Grandpa doing at his 90th? Guess it depends on the grandpa...

## Cook and carry?

**Portable microwave ovens:** These gadgets have existed for a while now, looking like a cross between a toolbox and a normal microwave with a handle glued on top. But young designer Matthew Schwartz sees things in a way most of us don't. His invention, created as part of a design competition sponsored by an appliance manufacturer, is only hand-sized. It slides onto specially made frozen meal packages and uses eco-friendly paper batteries to heat the food. Clever. Now all we need is more pockets.

No need to wait until you get home to heat up your dinner.

(WOMAN) GETTY IMAGES



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# Right Here Right Now

LIFE SAVER

## The Hug of Life

There's new hope for pre-term babies and babies with low birth weight: the Embrace infant warmer. The snug sleeping bag-like device keeps the babies, who are unable to produce enough body heat for survival, at the optimum 98.6 degrees F—body temperature—without the danger of burns (possible from a traditional warming device, like an incubator or a radiant warmer) and at no great expense. At less than ₹15,000, it is ideal for rural hospitals that can't afford incubators and where the power supply may be erratic. Invented by a group of four students from Stanford University, the Embrace makes use of what physicists call a "phase-change material," capable of storing and slowly releasing large amounts of energy. It doesn't require medical personnel to operate it. The Embrace is already helping infants in India, where about 30% of all newborns are underweight. "Most importantly, it allows for close contact between mother and child—she can breastfeed and care for her baby by herself," says Dr Asha Benakappa, professor of pediatrics at Bangalore's Vani Vilas Medical College and Hospital. For more information, visit *embrace-innovations.com or call 1800 1033 123*.

**1. The pouch, filled with phase-change material, is warmed in its heater for about 20 minutes.**

**2. Placed in the bacteria-resistant sleeping bag, the pouch maintains the optimum 98.6 F temperature for four to six hours.**

**3. Once the baby is placed in the bag, the pouch absorbs or releases heat depending on the baby's temperature.**

*Aarti Narang*

PHOTOS: EMBRACE



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Dove
damage therapy

# Get your beautiful hair back

Ever tried observing your seemingly beautiful hair? Sometimes the split ends, rough texture, frizzy hair, dry strands and brittleness are typical signs of a Damaged Hair. This can come from blow-drying, wind, chemical treatments, heat styling methods and environmental influences.

Let's look at the few causes of damage behind the seemingly beautiful hair:

### Damage from the Environment

Environment has major impact on hair health. Harsh weather conditions make hair dry, brittle and prone to breakage. UV rays from the sun can cause dryness to the hair and fade hair color. UV rays breaks protein in the hair and thereby making them dry and damaged. Minerals from hard water can also strip the hair and give it a brittle appearance.

### Thermal Damaged Hair

Thermal damage is caused by the practice of using heat to style and manipulate hair. This includes flat ironing, blow-drying and hair dryers. Heat cracks hair's cuticle and withdraws moisture – leaving hair dry and brittle. This causes damage to the hair. Damaged hair looks rough and is prone to split ends. Chemically damaged hair feels brittle and often looks like straw.

Fix your hair damage problem with:

**Dove intense repair mask protects your hair from the damaged caused by extensive styling and exposure to chemicals. It restores up to 1 week of protein loss and makes your hair soft and smooth. It contains conditioning ingredients which helps in smoothening hair and prevent future damage and moisture loss. The moisturising serum and the oil in the mask helps keep hair looking good and manageable. A vita-protein complex in the mask helps to replenish the hair and fibre actives helps in rebuilding internal intra-protein bonds within the hair cortex to repair internal damage. Dove intense repair mask helps to ensure hair is more resilient to future damage.**

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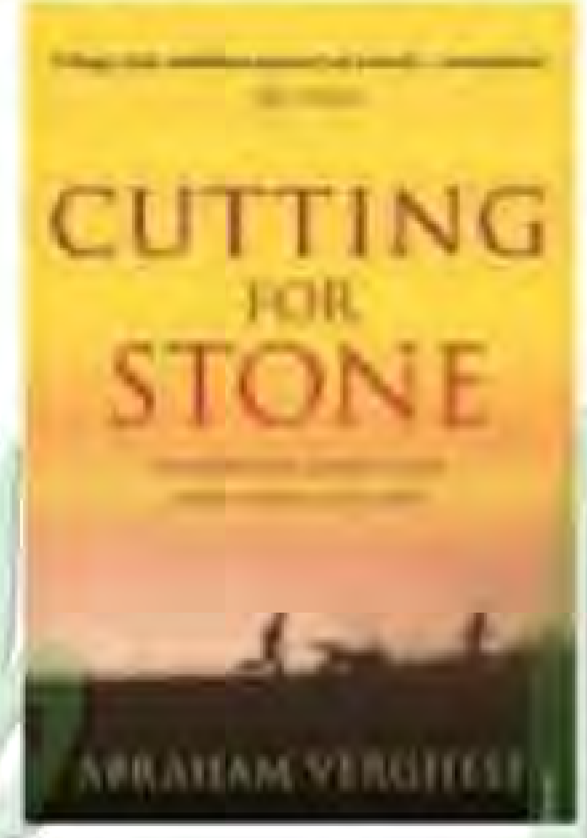
# When Good Doctors Write

**CUTTING FOR STONE**
By Abraham Verghese (Vintage Books ) ₹740
**BETTER: A SURGEON'S NOTES ON PERFORMANCE**
By Atul Gawande (Penguin India) ₹325

Many Indian doctors have made it big in the USA as the leading men in their specialities. Very few, though, have gained recognition in medicine as well as in another profession. Abraham Verghese and Atul Gawande, doctor-writers both, are among these.

Verghese is a professor at Stanford University and an authority on how to improve the patient-doctor relationship. Gawande, a surgeon who specializes in endocrine tumours, teaches at Harvard. In their writer-avatars, both men have made a name for themselves in non-fiction. Verghese's first book, *My Own Country*, about his treating AIDS patients in a small American town, was shortlisted for a top literary award and made into a film by Mira Nair.

*Cutting for Stone* is Verghese's third book and his first stab at fiction. A long, sprawling novel, it's set mostly in Ethiopia, where Verghese grew up, and is the story of Marion and Shiva Stone, identical twins who are the children of Sister Mary, a Malayali nun-cum-nurse, and Thomas Stone, a taciturn English surgeon. Sister Mary dies while giving birth and Stone, blaming the twins for her death, disappears. The boys are raised by Kalpana Hemlatha and Abhi Ghosh, doctors in the same missionary hospital where Sister Mary and Stone worked.




Along with Genet, the attractive one of Hemlatha's servants, the twins form a close threesome, and grow up in a beautiful country racked by political tension. Then Marion is betrayed again, this time by his twin. He is deeply wounded and the two brothers, once so close that they could divine each other's thoughts, grow steadily apart.

Marion becomes a doctor, but is forced to flee Ethiopia when he is suspected of being involved in a plane hijacking. While working in a rundown New York hospital, he accidentally meets his father, who is now a celebrated liver surgeon.

The overly melodramatic plot and Verghese's fondness for describing medical procedures in excruciating clinical detail may irritate fastidious readers. But there are also passages of great beauty and the author's love for Ethiopia and for medicine are very moving. Verghese is also a storyteller who can keep you wanting to know what happens next. No wonder this book has sold more than a million copies.

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Atul Gawande's credentials are, if anything, even more impressive than Verghese's. He is a Rhodes scholar and was a senior adviser to President Bill Clinton. One of his articles was cited by Barack Obama while trying to pass new legislation to reform America's health-care system.

Unlike Verghese, though, Gawande has stuck to non-fiction, and *Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance* is his second book. It's about how doctors—and, by extension, pretty much any person in a responsible profession—grapple with the obstacles they confront (one of which is themselves) and improve their performance.

Gawande argues that three qualities are essential to do better. The first is diligence—the ability to pay attention to detail and not be fazed by obstacles. The second is behaving ethically. The third is ingenuity, which as Gawande puts it, demands "more than anything a willingness to recognize failure, to not paper over the cracks, and to change. It arises from deliberate, even obsessive, reflection on failure and a constant searching for new solutions."

Now, we don't need a Gawande to tell us how important these qualities are. But, as readers of this magazine know, they're not easy to practise. We need to be regularly reminded about them and to hear stories of both people who do—and don't—try live up to such high standards. *Better* has several such interesting stories, and their leisurely style, Gawande's thoughtful and graceful prose make the book a pleasure to read.

Most of Gawande's stories are US-based. The matters they deal with include the seemingly simple problem of getting doctors and nurses in American hospitals to regularly wash their hands, the ethics of the high fees charged by doctors, and the ingenious advances that have transformed the way babies are delivered and incurable diseases like cystic fibrosis are managed.

Two stories in *Better* will be of special interest to us in India. One, an example of diligence, is about how health authorities successfully contained a potential outbreak of polio in Karnataka in 2003 by vaccinating over 4 million children in three days. (No fresh polio cases have been reported in India since January 2011, suggesting that the country is now polio-free, a remarkable achievement.)

The other Indian story in *Better* is about the medical ingenuity displayed by some of the surgeons at the government's district hospital in Nanded, a town in Maharashtra. These accounts will come as a useful check to those of us who assume that the government always botches things up and that government doctors are lazy shirkers who rarely bother about their patients.

**ASHOK MAHADEVAN**



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# Retired? Not Us

## Two teachers leave their jobs—and the rat race—to travel and live their dream

BY JENNIFER MINTER

Relaxing under clear blue skies in Australia's Kosciuszko National Park, a gentle breeze whispers through the towering eucalyptus trees surrounding a deep-green thermal pool. Tumbling water massages my head and shoulders as I float carefree in the warm, clear water.

What a contrast to my life of the past 33 years. Ruled by deadlines, red tape, bosses, technology and expectations, I can't help thinking of my former colleagues with sympathy. I feel like a load has been lifted from my shoulders and I just can't stop smiling.

As my husband Jeff and I enjoy a picnic lunch under a gum tree, we chat about how dramatically our lives have changed. Both teachers, we'd gone from school, to university, to school. We were both 55 when we took long-service leave in a lead-up to the living of the dream we'd long talked about and imagined. There was a big, wide world to explore and we wanted to do it while we still could. "We can either keep working for a few more years, then travel overseas, or we can retire early and travel around Australia," my hubby announced after analyzing our finances. Both of us had grown weary of the demands of our jobs; we knew what we wanted to do.

The dream became official when we invested in a swanky new caravan and new car to pull it. By the time retirement approached, we'd paid off the instalments on both pieces of essential equipment and accumulated some "toys" as well: fold-up bikes, a blow-up canoe, a good camera, and a laptop and printer. After a couple of short holidays in our caravan, we were hooked.

We've never looked back. We may

Australians Jennifer Minter and her husband, Jeff, perennially take off to explore their country, leaving their son and daughter to mind the house.

PHOTOS: JENNIFER AND JEFF MINTER



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Jeff, away from home in the Minters' blow-up canoe.

now be income-poor, but we're time-rich and able to travel six months of the year. This allows us to move slowly, staying for at least a week at each destination, relishing the time we have to relax or explore the environs, whether on foot, by bike or in our double kayak.

In 2007, we travelled along the Murray, Australia's longest river, from the New South Wales (NSW)-Victoria border to the river's mouth, then continued down the Limestone Coast of South Australia to Mount Gambier. We then headed north to Adelaide and around the Yorke and Eyre peninsulas. The landscape became our new classroom, with the region's rich and varied history providing welcome lessons.

Along the Murray we learnt about paddle steamers, the building of locks and weirs, the introduction of irrigation—and the devastating 1956 floods. Further inland, we heard of the establishment of the merino sheep industry; the shearers' fight for decent working conditions; much about agriculture; and the history of inland farming.

Even though I once taught Australian history, I discovered



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**Jennifer, *above*, appreciates the giant wombat at Naracoorte Caves, South Australia's only World Heritage site. At *right*, the Cape Jaffa Lighthouse in Kingston.**

there was plenty I didn't know. For example, the town of Hay, a thriving agricultural community in NSW, had an internment camp for thousands of POWs during World War II; and that Cornish and Welsh immigrants were once part of the backbone of a booming copper industry at Burra, 154 kilometres north of Adelaide.

At the Naracoorte Caves, South Australia's only World Heritage site, we gazed in awe at fossils and re-creations of mega-fauna. Carefully climbing the spiral staircase of the reconstructed Cape Jaffa Lighthouse in Kingston, we were astonished to hear up to three families had lived and worked in this tiny high-up dwelling.

Jeff and I also became students of native wildlife. I learnt to recognize the high-pitched whistle of the marsh harrier, a bird of prey; discovered that the land-dwelling maned ducks are protective of their fluffy brood; and noticed that ibis roost at sunset and fly out to forage in marshy wetlands at sunrise. Pelicans, black swans, swamphens,

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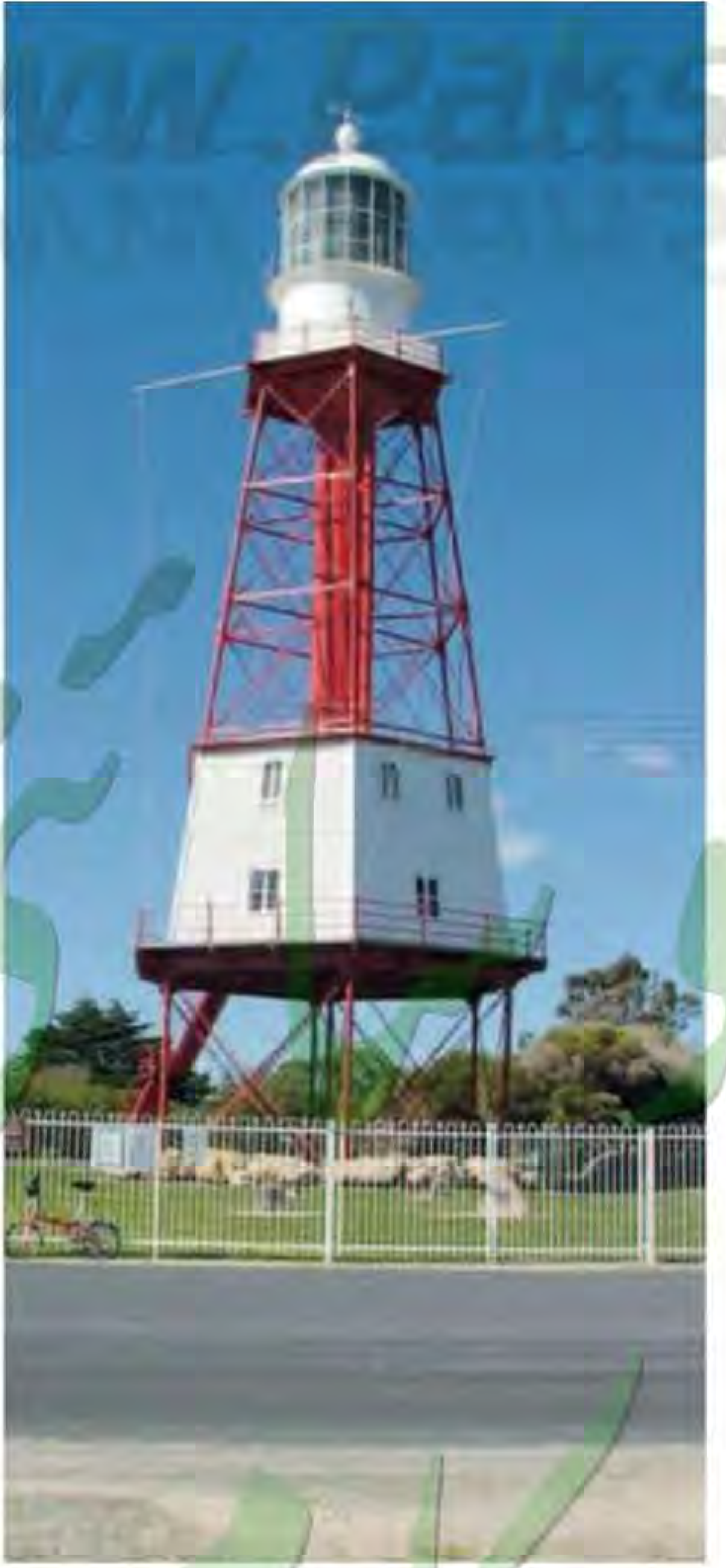

than craning to peer into the branches. I learnt that if you walk too close to a trundling echidna—spiny anteater—it will freeze into a spiky ball, blending into the bush.

**Since retiring,** new experiences have become part of our daily lives. We've climbed volcanoes, visited huge pine plantations and wind farms, and marvelled at intricate limestone formations. We've survived gale-force winds, hard frosts and day-long fogs. We've ridden our bikes and paddled along the Murray. We've learnt to catch squid from a jetty, and how to clean and cook them.

After a life of routine and regimentation, I love waking up to the unexpected every day. Your own country can be amazing, if you go out and do what we do; with so much to learn, see and do, there is no need to fear boredom. We're living the dream, folks, and we're loving it!

cormorants, screeching corellas and butcherbirds are all now familiar sights for us.

I discovered that it was far easier to spot a koala by looking for droppings below a gum tree rather

**Do you have a true, unpublished story? Send it to the Editorial address, or e-mail: mystory.rd@gmail.com. Your story can fetch you ₹6000.**

## SEATS OF TIME

**A carpenter we know** makes excellent furniture but usually goes way beyond deadline to finish a job. Recently, I asked my daughter if we should hire him to make some dining chairs for us.

She shook her head. "By the time we get them," she said, "we'll need wheelchairs."

*Jessica Mahadevan,* Mumbai



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# Ask Dayal

BY DR DAYAL MIRCHANDANI

► **As a 47-year-old man,** *with two teenage children, I sometimes seek intimacy with my wife, who always refuses. I've told her of my dejection and tried to explain the necessity of such a relationship to no avail. She doesn't tell me why she refuses either. How can I take my mind off my loneliness and need for physical intimacy?*

*Lonely Husband*

Dear Lonely,
You have a serious problem—especially since your wife refuses to talk about it. There are no easy answers on how to deal with this. Meet a marriage counsellor who will work with you on developing a strategy to bring your wife into therapy and, if this does not work, on exploring other options to deal with your difficult situation.

► *My parents' fighting bogs me down. While they don't really have a shouting match, their attitude towards each other changes, and this tenses things up in the house. Trying to talk to them about this hasn't worked but I'd like to resolve the situation—it's now affecting my concentration and preparation for my SSC exams. Please help.*

*The Negotiator*

Dear Negotiator,
Your situation is increasingly common. You can talk to your grandparents and other senior members of the family from both sides to convince your parents to seek professional marriage counselling. In the meanwhile, work on changing your own reaction to the situation by first accepting that you are not responsible for and

ILLUSTRATED BY SAMEER KULKARNI



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cannot change the situation. You may also find mindfulness training helpful in mentally disconnecting from unpleasant situations. Learn more at *http://goo.gl/RNZfR*

*I've just completed my 12th standard exams and would like to take up a job during my holidays to help my father as he's in debt. But my parents, who are very protective of me as I'm a girl and their only child, would rather I stayed at home. How can I help my parents and still keep them happy?* Dutiful Daughter

Dear Daughter,
You need to allow your father to save face. If you say you'd like to help out with the debt, he is unlikely to agree to let you work as it makes him feel like a failure as a provider. However, if you convince him that you'd like to get work experience or learn a new skill that will be helpful to your career, he may change his mind.

## Question of the Month

**Even though I'm 25, I find myself unable to do things independently. I'm unable to handle my finances or even operate my own bank account, I depend on my parents to accompany me to new places. Though I've done well academically, I can't help wondering if this is indicative of low intelligence. If you could tell me what is wrong with me, I'm sure I can set it right.**

*Finding My Feet*

Dear Finding,
There are various kinds of intelligences and this kind of behaviour could indicate that you have a dependent personality. You should discuss this with your parents and ask them to encourage you to make independent decisions and do things by yourself. Meeting with a good psychotherapist could make this process more successful as underlying emotional factors like confidence and self-esteem could be resolved.

*My parents and I keep arguing about all sorts of things—my choice of career (I'm interested in writing), views on religion, my lifestyle, among other things. The pressure is getting to me and I've started cutting myself up these days, though I feel bad about it. How do I make them understand how I feel?* Much Aggrieved

Dear Aggrieved,
The fact that you've started cutting yourself indicates you need to consult a good psychotherapist immediately. Therapy will also involve your parents and your issues with them. Self-help measures are unlikely to help and ignoring these issues now can lead to problems for you later in life.

**Questions about pets, parents, progeny, partners or office politics? E-mail psychiatrist Dr Dayal Mirchandani at advice.rd@gmail.com**



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# Brijendra: Man With a Mission

Two shots rang out and reverberated across the hills that towered over the Kalagarh reservoir, shattering the peace of the Corbett Tiger Reserve in Nainital District. Brijendra Singh, a Steering Committee Member of Project Tiger, heard the sound and sprang into action. He headed straight for the edge of the vast reservoir where he saw a tight group of people hovering over the carcass of a chital deer. A long-time Corbett defender, Singh whipped out his licensed revolver and conducted a citizen's arrest, only to discover that in his custody he had virtually the entire senior brass of the Uttar Pradesh district administration. This included the District Commissioner, District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police, the Sub Divisional Magistrate and the Police Station House Officer!

Believing they were the law and therefore above it, they imagined they were immune from such action. But they had not accounted for a firebrand called Brijendra Singh. He got staff to pick up the unfortunate deer as evidence, confiscated their weapons and laughed in the face of their threats, protestations of innocence and, eventually, their pleas for mercy.

This early 1980s incident made headlines at the time. It's not easy to defend the wildlife of India, but the ripples of that arrest served to protect Corbett for over a decade, during which virtually no major incidents involving the high and mighty took place.

Singh's defence of Corbett was nothing new. In the late 1960s he used his good offices with Mrs Indira Gandhi to prevent a three-star hotel from being built in Khinnanauli in the heart of the reserve. He also successfully prevented the setting up of a Police Academy in Corbett's Kalagarh Range. And he was with Christian and Nadine Zuber in 1972 when they took the heart-breaking image of a tiger caught in a leg trap, which some say hastened Mrs Gandhi's decision to launch Project Tiger.

Seeing all this, legendary conservationist the late Billy Arjan Singh suggested to Mrs Gandhi that his nephew, the young Brijendra Singh, be appointed Honorary Wildlife

Bittu Sahgal is Editor of *Sanctuary Asia* magazine and a member of the National Board for Wildlife.



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Hands-on: Brijendra at work.

Warden of the Corbett Tiger Reserve. Ever since, this amazing man has worked assiduously to consolidate the protection of the Corbett landscape. Today his name is synonymous with the park named after the famous hunter-conservationist Jim Corbett.

I have known Brijendra Singh for over three decades now, but it took months of persuasion to get him to accept a Lifetime Service Award from *Sanctuary Asia* in 2009. After hearing me out patiently, his first response was: "Why me? Why give me an award for merely doing what I love to do?" I went on to explain, painstakingly, the rationale for the awards: How young persons needed real heroes; how it was necessary to imbed in the psyche of our people that those willing to put their lives on the line to protect India's natural heritage were no less than those willing to die on our borders. Eventually what convinced him to accept the award, I think, was the fact that his uncle, Billy, had accepted the same honour from us six years earlier!

A product of Doon School in Dehradun, Brijendra has read every book written by his hero Jim Corbett. When he first saw the forests of Kumaon, he says, he felt Jim's spirit in the glades. For years he would seek out and walk the precise trails described in Corbett's captivating stories, comparing what was to what remained.

When I asked him what he felt lay in store for tigers tomorrow, his response was muted: "This is now our last chance. The thick forests through which the road ran from Chilla (on the banks of the Ganga, opposite Haridwar) to Kalagarh are gone. Gone, too, is the beautiful pool at Boxar and the rest house and some of the best tiger habitat in the park—Sherbojhi and Ringora. And today Corbett is literally being ring-barked (a method used to kill trees by stripping bark from the trunk) by mushrooming lodges and resorts. But we can and will prevail by defending this forest with our lives and by adding crucial areas to create the Greater Corbett Landscape. But this will only be possible if the people of India want their children to see wild tigers and elephants thriving in living forests like Corbett."

And I would add... if we have more men with Brijendra's courage. ■

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# @Work

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

*"Relax. I'm from the Income Tax office. Death and taxes have merged."*

Our manager complained in a staff meeting that he wasn't getting enough respect. To emphasize his point, next day he brought in a small sign that read "I'm the Boss!" and pinned it to his office door. He went off for lunch and when he returned he found a note taped to his new notice. *What's this?* he thought. *An apology for the way I've been treated, or some other important matter perhaps?*

The note read: "Your wife called. She wants her sign back."

*Iain Gilbert*

**At our editorial** office, we were finalizing the pages of a collection of love stories for a February Valentine's Day feature, when the art director spoke. "Too many widows," she opined, looking at the pages on her computer.

"No," I protested. "There's just one widow. In fact there's also a divorcee." Hearing that, the art director looked at me as if I'd gone nuts. I'd ignored printer's jargon, where a "widow" describes a line with just a single word. *M.S.*, Mumbai

**"Wanted," reads a sign posted in a market in Springfield, USA. "Clerk to work eight hours a day to replace one who didn't."**

*Aiman Ibrahim*

**My first job** was at a fine-dining establishment. One night my boss handed me $100 and told me to run to the McDonald's next door to get $100 worth of fries. But when I came back with two huge greasy sacks my boss looked confused. "What's this?" she asked. "The fries you asked for," I said. Her eyes narrowed. "I told you $100 in fives!"

*Kelly Semb*

**I work as** a corporate trainer. To help a group of finance workers prepare for a test, I quizzed them on general investing terms such as stock market, dividend, and so on. "What's a board lot?" I asked. A bank manager replied: "This group?"

*Lorraine English*

ILLUSTRATED BY HARLEY SCHWADRON



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## You Did What?

*What's the finest example of fiction today? The résumé. Here are some classics sent to bemused hiring managers:*

- Candidate listed military service dating back to before he was born.
- Candidate claimed to be a member of the Kennedy family.
- Job seeker claimed to be the CEO of a company, when he was an hourly employee.
- Job seeker included samples of work, which were actually those of the interviewer.

Source: *careerbuilder.com*

**I was presiding** over a wedding when the best man asked if I wouldn't mind also keeping an eye on the gift table. "There are a few people here the newlyweds don't trust around all that money," he confided. "Then why on earth were they invited?" I asked. Looking at me as if I were nuts, he said, "They're family." *David Gilbert*

**A man walked** into our medical practice complaining that he was in agony. "Where exactly is the pain?" asked his doctor. "Near my ovaries," he moaned.

"You don't have ovaries," we told him.

The patient looked confused. "When were they removed?"

*Kelli East*

**A father, who** had been minding the children while their mother was away, brought his toddler into our X-ray department. He was concerned his daughter might have accidentally swallowed the charm from his necklace while she was playing with it. To check for a swallowed object, the standard practice is to do a "gums to bum" X-ray—including the entire digestive tract. In this case, the exam ended halfway to the stomach, where the charm was found. It read, "No.1 Dad." *C. Gunn*

**When my back** seized up, I called my doctor's clinic, explaining that I was a priest and was in too much pain to deliver my sermon. Could they help? The woman on the other end asked me to hold. The next thing I heard was a loud voice announcing, "I have a priest on the phone who can't stand to preach!" *Gilbert Vieira*

**Some water-supply** workers were completing a job in our neighbourhood. I recognized the supervisor by the white hard hat he was wearing and pointed him out to my seven-year-old grandson, Daniel. I asked him if he knew how I could tell which man was the boss. Daniel replied, "Because he doesn't do anything?" *Joe A. Prasad*

**Get paid! Your anecdote is worth ₹1000. Post it to the Editorial address or e-mail: editor.india@rd.com**



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# In My Opinion

BY KAREN KRIZANOVICH

# Depression Is Good for You

## Yes, a serious bout of depression can leave you feeling isolated and hopeless. But it can also have a very positive effect on your life

“How can depression be beneficial? I suppose I could learn a lot from getting hit by a bus?”

That’s the sort of response I often get after suggesting that this common illness has its upside. Around one in five Britons gets depression at some point in their lives and I was one of them, following a miscarriage and divorce. My condition wasn’t chronic, manic or psychotic, but there were times when I woke up disappointed to be alive. Depression can ruin relationships, cause people to lose their jobs and even self-harm. So why would I think that it can be positive?

Learning how to cope with, and gradually recover from depression, is like rediscovering how to walk after an accident: you take small, progressive steps. We know the value of sometimes learning lessons the hard way, and depression can be a tough experience that leaves you with skills and personal insights that can help make the rest of your life much more rewarding.

Firstly, it’s usually a sign that change is needed in your life—“the psychic equivalent of physical pain,” as evolutionary psychologist Ed Hagen of the Institute of Theoretical Biology in Berlin puts it. It can be the brain’s way of jolting us into realizing that we’ve been settling for an unsatisfactory status quo and need to find a new direction.

When Sheena Jones’s* youngest daughter left home, for instance, the 47-year-old housewife from Sidcup, south-east London, felt lost—a typical empty nester. This eventually developed into a full-on depression that lasted eight months. But the emotional impact of the illness made her confront her problem. “I stopped

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completely and really worked it through," she says. "When I was ready, I took a fresh path in life without the baggage, starting a successful retail business in a field in which I had no previous experience."

Sally Ford*, a 39-year-old who got depression after her bookshop went out of business, found it can make you more resilient, too. "You have to overcome it or it overwhelms you," she says. "It was the oppressor I fought against every minute by learning to cut off negative thoughts. This sort of willpower is like a muscle that grows stronger the harder you work it."

Soon after, she found herself suddenly having to care for her aging parents, but found she could cope much better than she might have done in the past. "I'd gained the confidence to make important decisions and act on them," she says.

**The intense negative** emotion and self-scrutiny of depression also cuts through your usual muddled collection of thoughts and can leave you with a more focused way of thinking. An international study this year, by a group of researchers from universities including Stanford in the

* Asterisked names changed to protect privacy



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US, showed that depressed and previously depressed people did better on a job-search computer simulator because they were more analytical and thorough. British journalist Alastair Campbell and athlete Dame Kelly Holmes have both said that depression has helped them succeed by increasing their ability to concentrate on specific targets. And it made me more proactive in developing my journalistic career, because it helped me realize that the days I used to spend playing solitaire on my laptop were nothing other than a short-term distraction from feeling low.

Another positive effect of depression is that it makes you more tolerant of frailties, bearing out the theories of certain branches of Buddhism that suffering brings on empathy. It could, for example, help you understand that a friend is disproportionately annoyed by a comment not because they're bad tempered, but because of what might have happened in their past. Or if you end up with depression because you fail at something, it may show you that it's better to adjust your goals and allow yourself some smaller victory.

"I have more compassion than I ever had before, and I know myself better because of my struggles," says depression sufferer Therese Borchard, author of *Beyond Blue: Surviving Depression & Anxiety*. So, yes, depression can be good for you. It can force you to find resources within yourself where you thought there were none, and can create the kinds of hope and strength that do not fade. It's a challenge that, ultimately, sows the seeds of its own demise, and can lead you to a life of going from strength to strength, rather than merely hanging on.

**Do you agree? Has depression ever helped you, or made you stronger?**
**E-mail:** editor.india@rd.com

## CONVERSATION STOPPER

**The day we moved** to town, my six-year-old and I launched a wine bottle, complete with a message, down the creek of our rural property. Soon after, I attended a Mother's Day luncheon at my daughter's new school, glad of the chance to meet some other mothers. The children had all drawn portraits of their mothers and the drawings festooned the gym walls. One by one each mother identified hers until, by process of elimination, I found mine. I peered at the picture, then asked, "What's that in Mummy's hand?"

With the volume of a Shakespearean actor, she replied, "You know, Mummy, that's your wine bottle!"

*Barb Wilk*



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# Kindness
OF STRANGERS

If you have a heart, you can help anybody

## Night at the Border

It was a cold evening in 1999. My husband and I sat by the road outside Salloum, an Egyptian border-crossing point. We had left by bus from the Libyan city of Benghazi, where we were working as professors, to meet our daughter in Cairo. She was to arrive there from the US the next day to spend a 10-day vacation with us. But at the Salloum check post the bus conductor had returned our passports and off-loaded us, saying that a new rule prohibited teachers from leaving Libya! Our daughter was travelling alone, and in those days Egyptian rules mandated that an unaccompanied female traveller had to be received by people known to her at Cairo airport.

It was the end of the Ramzan month. My husband and I waited as the sun went down and people around us broke their fast. An Egyptian man offered us some food. "I work in Benghazi," he told us, "but I'm going home to celebrate Ramzan with my parents." We told him of our plight and he took us to an official at the checkpoint to get our clearance. The only person, we were told, with the authority to let us leave was the chief passport officer (CPO), who was in the city of Salloum. "You must meet the officer," the Egyptian said, and found us a taxi. "My bus is leaving now, but I'll wait for you on the other side of the border. See you there!"

My husband rode away in the taxi. I stayed back, guarding our bags. When he returned, I learnt that

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despite the taxi driver explaining matters in Arabic, the CPO had refused any exit visas for us. "Perhaps you should stay in a hotel tonight and return to Benghazi tomorrow," the driver suggested.

We reminded him about our daughter. "Hmm... Let me go for my prayers and eat something. I'll be back." We wondered if he would return, but he did, soon afterwards. He wanted my husband to approach the passport officer once again. I waited there for a second time that cold night. Tired, I was soon dozing off. Then, around midnight, my husband woke me up. This time the driver and another man accompanied him. "We've got the visas! Here, this is Dr Mohammed," said my delighted husband. "He's from India too. He helped us."

As I turned to thank the men, Dr Mohammed spoke: "You must leave for Egypt immediately." While we were being driven across in another taxi, my husband told me what really happened. The first driver had said he knew of a famous doctor from *Hind* in Salloum. Reaching Dr Mohammed's house, my husband was told he had gone for his prayers. So they went to a mosque and managed to find the doctor who also happened to be, like us, from Andhra Pradesh. The good doctor accompanied them to the CPO, who was very different this time. He hugged the doctor and signed our exit visas immediately.

When we reached the Egyptian side after a short ride, the new driver refused any payment, saying Dr Mohammed had asked him not to take anything from us. We also found the friendly Egyptian waiting for us! He arranged another taxi, bargaining and getting us a reasonable fare and saw us off. The next day, we met our daughter at Cairo airport and told her of the amazing generosity of the three men who'd made our holiday possible. *Dr K. Rajalakshmi,* Hyderabad

## Library Uncle

I must have been about six years old when we lived in Jhansi, UP. At the far end of the ground, where I'd play with my friends every evening, was a library, and we'd see many people walk in and out of it with books in their hands.

One evening I went in and spoke to the librarian, who sat near the entrance. "May I have a book?" I said. The man looked at me. "*Beta*," he said kindly, "you have to become a library member before you can borrow any book."

I looked down. All I knew was that I wanted a book, and couldn't get one. As I turned to leave, somebody broke the silence—a middle-aged man sitting at a big table nearby, where people read newspapers.

*"Bachcha hai,"* he said. "Please issue a book to him from my account." The librarian muttered something about rules and, once again, I felt I ought to leave. But as I reached the door, the librarian called me back and took me to a cupboard



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from where I chose a book. I went back to the big table to thank the gentleman, but ended up standing before him and saying nothing. I was overwhelmed, maybe a bit intimidated as well. He looked up from his newspaper once again, smiled at me, and went back to his reading.

The arrangement continued for a while—I often saw my benefactor there, but could somehow never muster the courage to speak to him—until the day my father got to know of it. Papa then became a member so that I could borrow books in a more regular manner. But the gentleman's gesture taught me early on to give others, if you could, a fair chance—even if you must go out of your way or push the envelope a little.

*Syed Vizarat Ali,* Nagpur

## Still in Service

One morning I finished some business at a bank and was returning to my Yamaha motorbike, which I'd left in the parking lot outside. Suddenly, I realized I'd lost its key. Upset, I searched in the bank. "It's definitely stolen," declared a bank employee who'd tried to help me find it. So I walked to my bike to look for it, when I found a well-built elderly gentleman standing there.

"What are you looking for?" he asked.

"I've lost my bike's key, sir," I said.

"You're going to lose your bike too," he said, ominously.

Seeing my startled expression, he explained: "I saw you searching in the bank. When I came out, I found a group of boys trying out a key in all the Yamaha bikes here. This didn't seem right, so I questioned them." After that, they went into the bank and the elderly man was expecting them to return. So he'd stayed put. Indeed, a group of boys had asked me where my bike was, when they saw me search for the key.

"Do you have a spare key?" the elderly man asked me.

"Yes sir, at my hostel."

"Well then, go and fetch it," he said. "Take this scooter, and use this lock and chain from my scooter to secure your bike while I wait here."

I offered him my identity card to keep until I returned.

"No need for that, son," smiled the man. "I retired after 40 years with the police. I can tell a crook from an honest man. Go, get your key."

I returned with my spare key, touched his feet and thanked him before he rode away.

*Anubinda Mohanty,* Rourkela, Odisha

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**They can read, can they?** Sign at a beach in Australia: "Pelicans Fed Daily. No Dogs Please."

*Max Edwards*



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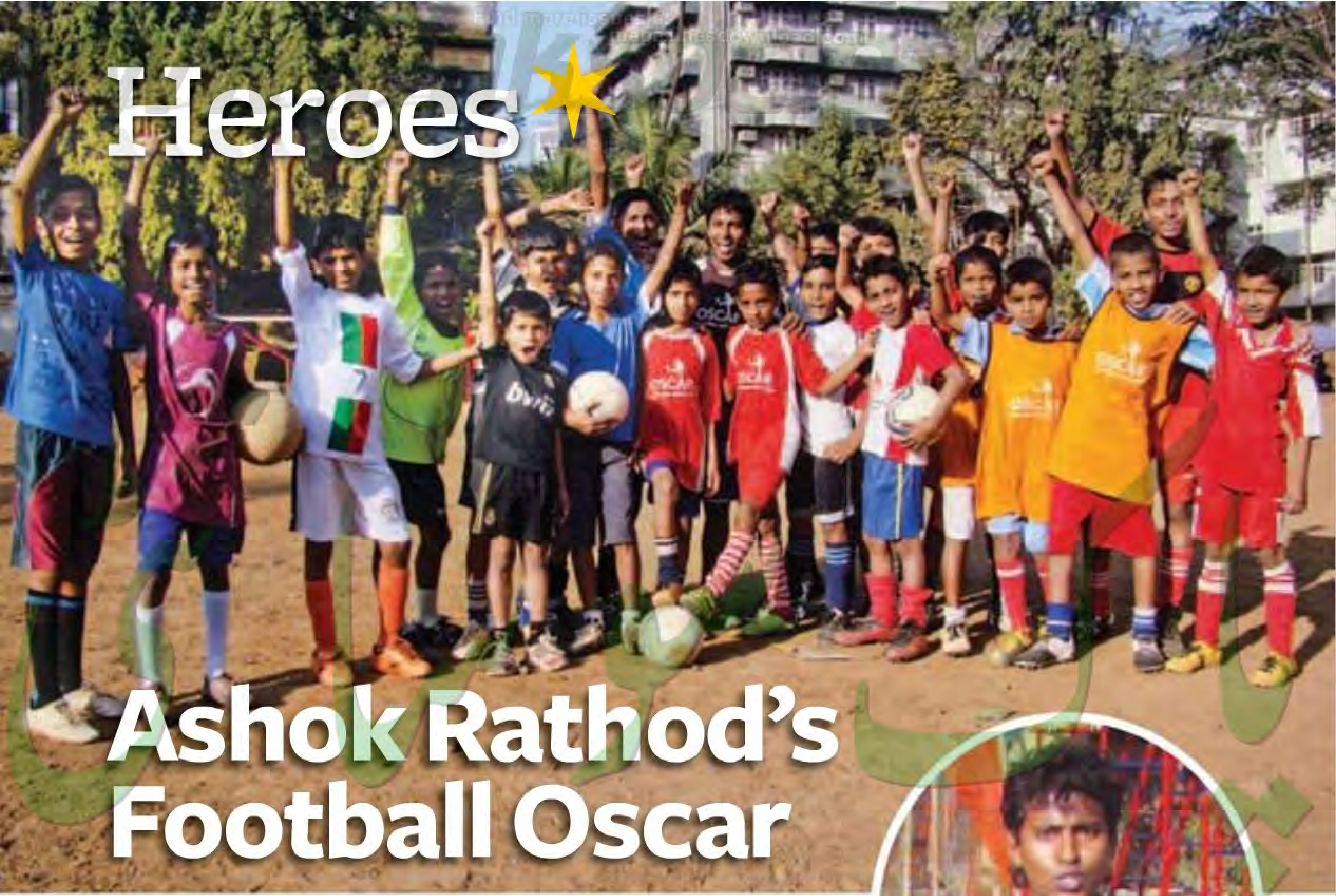

# Heroes

# Ashok Rathod's Football Oscar

## A young lad who once almost dropped out of school is inspiring other kids to get an education

BY ALEXANDRIA BARTON-D'SOUZA

It's early morning on a Sunday and an excited group of boys play football in the Back Garden, a large ground in Colaba, South Mumbai. Both teams are wearing colourful jerseys printed with logos that say: OSCAR—Education With a Kick.

At 23, Ashok Rathod, short and curly haired, is the oldest of the players. Unlike the others, he's also yelling instructions on how to kick or pass and egging the others on—Ashok isn't just playing for his team, nor is he [*inset, above*] the fastest or the most skilful footballer here, yet the boys in both teams follow his lead and take directions from him.

Today's first goal-scorer is Anil Chauhan. Tall and well built, he's from nearby Ambedkar Nagar, a sprawling slum colony of about 12,000 people. Anil had, like many poor urban kids, dropped out after a few years of primary schooling. Years later, when he started working as a housekeeper in a bank, he realized his mistake.

RAKESH KARMARAN



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"I didn't know how to read or write and couldn't even sign my name," says Anil, who enrolled at a night school last year because of Ashok Rathod, his neighbour, who plays football with him thrice a week. "It doesn't matter that I'm only in class five and 22 years old," says Anil.

Many of the other players, too, went back to school because of Ashok, who started these football sessions five years ago.

When Ashok was a child, his father Shankar Rathod, a fisherman, regretted that his daughter and older son had dropped out of school. At one point Ashok too wanted to quit, but his father insisted that he continue—much against the neighbourhood norm. Ashok talks of how little value his peers and many of their parents placed on education.

"I saw boys regularly drop out of our municipal school," recalls Ashok. "Some left during a morning interval and never returned. As for the girls, a good many don't attend school anyway." The dropped-out boys used to hang out at the nearby Sassoon Docks, Mumbai's biggest fish market. They'd steal or pick up fish that had fallen from baskets, to sell and make easy money.

"And whenever or however they brought in some cash," Ashok explains, "the parents considered it clever." Worse, Ashok watched many of those boys squander these ill-gotten profits on drink, cigarettes and gambling. In 2006, after finishing high school, Ashok got a job with Magic Bus, a Mumbai NGO, which sent him to the city's poorer areas to mentor children. That's how he realized that team-sports, particularly football, forged friendships, and called for discipline. It also had, overall, a positive effect in the children's lives. *Why not do the same for the boys in my neighbourhood?* Ashok thought.

He offered to teach football to a few boys he knew. In exchange, he told them to promise not to miss classes. On a Sunday in October 2006, he got a ball and invited the kids to play. Eighteen boys turned up. Ashok called his group OSCAR, or the Organization for Social Change, Awareness and Responsibility.

Ashok, who learnt about football at Magic Bus, began teaching them the intricacies of the game. In between, he'd also slip in stories about his childhood friends who'd dropped out of school. "If you want a future, you've got to study," he urged over and over again, when they met to play on weekends. "Stay in school. I don't want you to end up like them!"

Meanwhile, Ashok was nervous about telling his family about OSCAR and his football sessions—what if his father objected? Since he was doing his Higher Secondary and working as well, Shankar Rathod would expect his son to spend his weekends catching up on school work—ironically, on the same days when Ashok was telling younger boys to study.

There were other problems as well.



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"Even if a boy wanted to return to school, it was often difficult convincing parents," he says. "In many cases, I had to go over and persuade them, often taking others with me." But once, after a few football players failed their final exams, their parents blamed Ashok. Football had become a distraction, they complained, as if nobody in their slum had failed before. "Some of the parents gathered outside my home, and shouted abuse," he says. "It was scary."

That's when Ashok's father came to know about it all. He warned his son to be careful. But the incident only made Ashok more determined. He enlisted the help of two NGOs to have those boys tutored for free in English, Hindi and mathematics. These NGOs also helped Ashok get more kids back in school.

Besides a few supportive NGOs, OSCAR gets individual donors to sponsor his footballers, who are now part of eight teams in all age groups of the Mumbai Football League. Every child on an OSCAR team has to abide by one rule: They have to attend school regularly and stay there. "And OSCAR doesn't want just great football players," says Ashok. "We want good human beings."

Today, five years after that first game, about 150 boys from Ambedkar Nagar and two neighbouring slum communities are part of the OSCAR Foundation's football program. Thrice a week, for two exciting hours, two coaches train these youngsters. Ten dropouts, including Anil, have so far returned to school, and it is hard to figure out how many are staying on because of Ashok and the power of football.

In 2009, Ashok won a CNN-IBN "Real Hero" award and with it, a cash prize, after taxes, of ₹3.45 lakh. "That's when my parents realized I was doing something worthwhile," Ashok smiles. "My father said he was proud of me." Ashok invested some of the money in a fixed deposit for OSCAR Foundation and registered it as a trust. He also bought a computer for the kids, purchased more football equipment and rented a tiny room in which some of the children receive extra tuitions.

Happy with the way things are going, Ashok has lately been shifting his focus on girls as well, offering to teach them football. "Having seen my boys, parents are actually sending their girls to play." Over the past few months, 20 girls between the ages of 10 and 16 have been learning the game through OSCAR and nearly all of them now attend school regularly.

Slowly, but surely, a change is taking place. Inspired by Ashok, a few more football-and-school groups, modelled on OSCAR, have sprung up in Ambedkar Nagar and its two neighbouring slums. Ashok Rathod is scoring higher goals.

**Know a hero from your area we should feature? Write to editor.india@rd.com to let us know. We will pay ₹1000 if your hero gets chosen.**



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# Quotes

I love living. I have some problems with life, but living is the best thing they've come up with so far.

*Neil Simon*

To remember friendship is to recall those conversations that it seemed a sin to break off: the ones that made the sacrifice of the following day a trivial one. *Christopher Hitchens*

Always read the stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.

*P.J. O'Rourke*

You can't have a multiracial country with a monoracial leadership.

*Nicholas Lemann,* quoted in *People*

To remember, as such, is neither good nor bad; it's what one remembers that makes the difference. *Antonio Gala,* El Manuscrito Carmesí (Editorial Planeta, Madrid)

The stories that you tell about your past shape your future.

*Eric Ransdell* in *Fast Company*

**Success is a lot like a bright, white tuxedo. You feel terrific when you get it, but then you're desperately afraid of getting it dirty, of spoiling it in any way.** *Conan O' Brien*

ILLUSTRATED BY CONAN O'BRIEN



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# Eagle of the Flock

## Angry birds determined to destroy the pigs that steal their eggs have made this Finn famous

BY REINO RASILAINEN

A couple of years ago, few people recognized the name Rovio Mobile Ltd, the Finnish game-producing company. Yet, in April 2011, Peter Vesterbacka, its chief marketing officer, was named by *Time* as one of the 100 most influential people in the world. The company's creation, the mobile-and-computer game Angry Birds, has become a phenomenon. The most downloaded game of all time—indeed the story of those furious cartoon birds whose eggs have been robbed by pigs has charmed people everywhere. It's catching on quickly in China and India well, as smartphones become more common.

**Reader's Digest:** *When did you realize that Angry Birds was a worldwide hit?*
**Peter Vesterbacka:** When the game's fans wanted to take photos with me. It felt a little baffling at first. A year ago we were pleased if someone in the US, for instance, recognized the bird figure on my sweatshirt. Nowadays, as soon as I get to the airport, the customs officers strike up a conversation with me, telling me to which level [in the game] they've already made it.

**RD:** *Was such success a surprise?*
**PV:** Not really. Rovio had already developed 51 games before Angry Birds was born. Each time a new game was finished, we made our friends and families test it first by giving it to them on a phone. Usually they returned the phones quite soon with a comment like "It was all right." When we gave them Angry Birds for testing, no one wanted to give up their test phones. They just wanted to keep playing.

**RD:** *How was Angry Birds born?*
**PV:** In the spring of 2009, our head designer, Jaakko Iisalo, created a game design featuring these bird characters. The original game idea didn't work, but everyone fell in love with the birds. We wanted to develop

LEHTIKUVA



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Peter Vesterbacka with the birds that have become a worldwide sensation.

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## Angry Others

Angry Birds has been downloaded millions of times in India alone and fans will find official Angry Birds merchandise that has been recently launched in India. When a Noida-based company developed "Angry Anna" [Hazare] on similar lines, the local game became an instant hit as Angry Indians virtually vented their fury on politicians by slinging anti-corruption activists against them. Meanwhile, "Angry Brides," another game developed by a matrimonial website, lets players attack prospective dowry-demanding grooms.

*Snigdha Hasan*

a game based on them. It took us eight months and finally, in December 2009, we brought it into the market. At first, we thought we would be able to sell 100,000 copies and thus cover the cost of developing it. Sales started gradually growing and the Angry Birds phenomenon took off in the spring of 2010.

**RD:** *Why is the game so popular?*
**PV:** It's easy to start playing Angry Birds but very hard to stop. The game is not too intense. It doesn't take fast reflexes to play. We receive feedback from grandparents saying that this is the first mobile game that they can play together with their grandchildren. But the main reason for the game's success is, after all, the birds.

**RD:** *What makes the birds so appealing?*
**PV:** They've got a bit of an edge. The birds are not the perfect superhero characters, and that makes it easy for people to identify with them. The birds are angry, but for a very good reason. There are many different bird characters in the game, each with its own fans.

**RD:** *Which bird is the most popular?*
**PV:** Probably the red one, because people get to see it a lot. The black bomb bird too—it's so effective.

**RD:** *And the least popular?*
**PV:** The boomerang bird invokes the most passionate responses. Some people like it the most and some hate it outright, because it is harder to use.

**RD:** *Does anyone like the pigs?*
**PV:** The pigs are quite popular, they sell well as toys.

**RD:** *With so much merchandise, is game development being pushed to the background?*
**PV:** Rovio is not "just" a game developer, but also an entertainment company. We have already put a lot of effort into developing our merchandise, such as toys and a cookbook. We intend to develop Angry Birds into a strong brand within the entertainment business. We are constantly developing new Angry Birds-theme games, but we won't publish them until we are 100-percent satisfied.

**RD:** *What is your favourite bird?*
**PV:** Mighty Eagle. I even have that as my title on my business card. ■



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# Word Power

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

**Meet and Greet** The rules of social engagement are always changing. But whether you interact mouse-to-mouse or face-to-face (now, *there's* a novel idea), it helps to speak the language of social harmony. Here's a primer on words concerned with idle conversation, mixing, and mingling. **Answers on next page.**

**1. diffident** *adj.*— A: argumentative. B: unmatched. C: shy.

**2. comity** *n.*—A: hilarious misunderstanding. B: social harmony. C: lack of respect.

**3. interlocutor** *n.*— A: formal escort. B: meddler. C: person in a conversation.

**4. gregarious** *adj.*— A: a little tipsy. B: fond of company. C: markedly rude.

**5. accost** *v.*—A: aggressively approach. B: offer to pay. C: decline to join.

**6. propriety** *n.*— A: home of a host. B: good social form. C: tendency to gossip.

**7. fulsome** *adj.*— A: broad-minded. B: physically attractive. C: excessively flattering.

**8. confabulate** *v.*— A: chat. B: get things backward. C: greet with a hug.

**9. brusque** *adj.*— A: clownish. B: discourteously blunt. C: full of questions.

**10. decorum** *n.*— A: high praise. B: dignified behaviour or speech. C: showy jewellery or makeup.

**11. unctuous** *adj.*— A: avoiding eye contact. B: on pins and needles. C: smug.

**12. urbane** *adj.*— A: suave and polished. B: known by everyone. C: pertinent to the subject.

**13. malapert** *adj.*— A: socially awkward. B: bold and saucy. C: disappointed.

**14. audacity** *n.*—A: long-windedness. B: good listening skills. C: gall.

**15. genteel** *adj.*— A: polite. B: macho. C: timid.

## Deep Roots

You're probably familiar with some common forms of the Latin roots *amare* ("to love") and *amicus* ("friendly"): the Italian *amore* and the Spanish *amigo*, for instance. But how about these English varieties, all also related to love or friendship? Words like *amiable*, *amicable*, *amorous*, and *paramour*, names such as Amy and Amanda, and even names like Amity University.

ILLUSTRATED BY LUC MELANSON



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## Answers

**1. diffident**—*[C]* shy. I would hardly call Veronica *diffident*—she's the centre of attention at every party she attends.

**2. comity**—*[B]* social harmony. Ducking for cover as the food fight intensified, Millie realized all *comity* at her table was lost.

**3. interlocutor**—*[C]* person in a conversation. Ever the gentleman, Professor Windham was sure to give other *interlocutors* time to speak.

**4. gregarious**—*[B]* fond of company. Dad is so *gregarious*, it's all we can do to keep him from hugging total strangers.

**5. accost**—*[A]* aggressively approach. Dev can't even walk across the room without someone *accosting* him for an autograph.

**6. propriety**—*[B]* good social form. "Someone should tell your daughter that *propriety* dictates that she eat her spaghetti with a fork," the hostess said, groaning.

**7. fulsome**—*[C]* excessively flattering. When meeting Bev's mom, Eddie praised her with such *fulsome* remarks that she rolled her eyes.

**8. confabulate**—*[A]* chat. Luca wants to *confabulate* a bit about the new office's blueprints.

**9. brusque**—*[B]* discourteously blunt. Padma did her best to hold her tongue after listening to the coach's *brusque* advice.

**10. decorum**—*[B]* dignified behaviour or speech. In a surprising show of *decorum*, the tipsy best man gave an endearing toast.

**11. unctuous**—*[C]* smug. Aditya, don't believe a thing that *unctuous*, money-grubbing sneak tells you.

**12. urbane**—*[A]* suave and polished. Deven's *urbane* persona was obvious as soon as he stepped into the room.

**13. malapert**—*[B]* bold and saucy. After the audition, Jenny gave the director a wink in a most *malapert* manner.

**14. audacity**—*[C]* gall. Did you hear the gossip that Eli had the *audacity* to repeat?

**15. genteel**—*[A]* polite. Geeta had to remind the twins to be *genteel* around their grandparents.

### VOCABULARY RATINGS

- **9 and below: lone wolf**
- **10–12: social butterfly**
- **13–15: life of the party**

**PLAY an interactive version of Word Power on your iPad or Kindle Fire by downloading the *Reader's Digest* magazine app.**

## Sound Smarter

Here's a faux pas to avoid in your next conversation: "wrought with danger." The proper phrase is **"fraught with danger."** *Fraught* means "full of or accompanied by," while *wrought* means "worked or beaten into shape" (as in *wrought iron*). However, if you're flustered or agitated by something, you're wrought or overwrought.



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# Are You... Normal or NUTS?

## Our periodic analysis of the quirks, tics, foibles, and zany habits that make us all too human

BY LENORE SKENAZY

Who, aside from those of us allergic to self-reflection, hasn't ever wondered whether our nutty behaviour means that we're, well, nuts?

For me, the moment of doubt arrived several years ago when I found myself in a conference-centre ladies' lounge, anxiously unwrapping a whole smoked mackerel. I can't—that is, won't—reveal any more, except to say that the mackerel offered little guidance to my dilemma at the time, and I wrapped it up again. Then, neither more enlightened nor less composed, I returned to the conference.



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My point: None of us is quite as sane as we seem, but neither is every weird thing we do irrefutable proof of insanity. In fact, a lot of our quirks prove that we're just that—quirky, not certifiable.

How to tell the difference? Start by reading the letters below, submitted by readers just like you, which have been analyzed by our panel of psychiatrists, psychologists, and other therapists.

*Recognize anyone?*

**NORMAL OR NUTS?** Lately, after I read an unusual name, place, or phrase—Reince Priebus, Burkina Faso, schadenfreude—**I often can't get it out of my head for days,** sometimes weeks. I silently repeat the words to myself, often spell them, and even wake up in the night with the words ringing in my head. Is my brain dying out?

**VERDICT**

## Compulsive but normal

That sounds like a minor obsession, say our experts: Your brain feels that for some reason it must repeat these words. "But compulsions aren't abnormal in and of themselves," says psychiatrist Franklin Schneier. So unless this one is taking up more than an hour of your day or truly interfering with your life, Schneier would consider it "an annoyance but not serious."

To stop the compulsion, embrace it. "Accept that it's happening," says Schneier, and that it's not the world's worst thing, just a personal idiosyncrasy. "If you say, 'Oh, my God! I've got to stop thinking about that word!' that's not productive." (try not to obsess about the word *idiosyncrasy*.)

Should the Zen strategy fail, try a more aggressive approach, says Schneier: Set aside ten minutes a day to repeat the word over and over again. Make a mental tape loop of it, and play it 100 times a day. Do it so many times that you finally get sick of it.

As an added benefit, you will probably learn these new words very well, says Schneier. You'll stun dinner guests with your erudition in describing a recurring dream in which you're overwhelmed by schadenfreude when—US politician Reince Priebus—he's of Greek and German descent—declares Burkina Faso to be his favourite Italian dish. "So maybe there's a silver lining," says Schneier.

**NORMAL OR NUTS?** I sometimes **have strange dreams when taking a nap,** and I think they're real when I wake up. Then, as I come around, I realize they aren't. Is there something wrong with me?

**VERDICT**

## Not nuts!

What's wrong is that you get to take naps and most of us don't! But are you unhinged? The unanimous consensus among our panel: no. We all have wild



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dreams, and it's normal, upon waking, to be fuzzy for a little while or even not remember where we are, especially if we wake up someplace unfamiliar, like a hotel. (Or a crater on Mars filled with unfinished Spanish homework.) Confusion is "normal because it lasts only a few seconds," says psychologist Margaret J. King, who studies behaviour across cultures to see what's universal and what's not as head of the Center for Cultural Studies & Analysis in Philadelphia, USA. "What's abnormal is if you don't snap out of it." Since you did—at least long enough to write a letter—you're fine.

**NORMAL OR NUTS?** I just turned 50 and **am having trouble recalling names**—even those of people I've worked with for years. Recently, I drove to work, parked my car in the lot, and at the end of the day couldn't remember where I'd left it. Should I be worried?

VERDICT

## Perfectly normal

Worried about what? Oh, right, forgetting things. That's usual for someone your age, says psychologist Alan

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

**"I'M A BIRD, I'M A PLANE ..."**



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Hilfer, chief of psychology at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. "That's why people in their 50s and 60s start calling everybody sweetie or champ or buddy. Because they have no idea what the person's name is."

Forgetfulness is not even a sign of impending dementia, Hilfer says, unless you can't remember where you put your shoe "and you open the refrigerator and it's on the first shelf." When something like that happens, you should consult a neurologist.

As for not being able to remember where your whatchamacallit is—the thing with wheels, that you drive? That's so normal, it has become sitcom fodder. "Didn't you ever watch *Seinfeld*?" asks Hilfer.

If you don't remember who Seinfeld is, then maybe it's time to see one of those guys who wear a white coat and a stethoscope.



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**NORMAL OR NUTS?** When people are eating, I can't stand the sound of a fork or spoon clanking on a plate or bowl. I get chills, nauseated, and a headache. I'm also **sickened by the sound of people chewing** with their mouths open. Is there something wrong with me?

**VERDICT**

## Possibly nuts

It's tempting to suggest there is something wrong with everyone else you know. How come they don't eat with their mouths closed? At the least, you are overly sensitive to minor irritations, says psychologist Pauline Wallin—a sensitivity she understands too well: "When I hear [news anchor] Diane Sawyer's voice on TV," she confesses, "I have to run and turn it off, it's so annoying."

Internist Archelle Georgiou, from Minneapolis, USA, says you may also be suffering from an obscure malady called misophonia. First described in 2001 by Emory University scientists Pawel and Margaret Jastreboff, the condition is characterized by a loathing of a range of sounds, such as those made by trains, musical instruments, and people (their breathing, for instance). According to British support group Misophonia UK (*misophonia-uk.org*), people with the disorder can feel an overwhelming desire "to escape the vicinity of the sound at all costs."

Try refocusing your attention away from the irritant, Wallin suggests. Concentrate as hard as you can on something else when you eat with your friends: the music in the background, the scene out the window, even—what a concept!—what they're talking about. You may be able to train yourself to be less bothered by the noise.

**NORMAL OR NUTS?** Years ago I read that flushing a toilet sends millions of germs into the air, so now I always flush with the lid down. But most public toilets, whether in office buildings or in airports, don't have lids, so **I sneak away without flushing**. Is this crazy?

**VERDICT**

## You're uneducated, not insane

"Well, it's certainly inconsiderate," says Dr Georgiou. While it's true that a spray of germs does get released during a flush, obsessing about that disgusting fact doesn't mean you're mentally ill, just ill-informed.

You should know that we're built to handle all those microbes and more. In fact, our bodies contain ten times more bacterial cells than human ones. "You're exposed to bacteria and viruses all day long," says osteopath Jeffrey Tipton, a specialist in preventive medicine in California, "and when you're exposed, your body recognizes and destroys them. It doesn't stop working just because you're in a public bathroom."



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# I SAY, "WASTE NOT, WANT NOT."

Psychologist Wallin suggests taking a clear-eyed look at the bathroom-going world. "We don't see people swooning all over the airport, collapsing from toilet fumes," she says. Moreover, in those carefree days before you read that article about flushing, you, too, survived just fine.

Still, all the reassurances in the world can't beat this straight-up experiment: Next time you're in a public loo, do your business and then ... flush! When you feel totally normal afterwards (and you will), the spell may well be broken.

And then it will be safe for the rest of us to use the bathroom after you.

**NORMAL OR NUTS?** I hadn't seen my mother in almost a year, and when I visited her recently, I noticed **the shelves in her basement were filled with cardboard tubes** from dozens of used paper-towel rolls. When I asked her what she planned to use them for, she said, "Oh, I just hate to throw them out." Should I be worried about her?

## VERDICT
## Worry a little

Umm ... have you seen any of those reality shows about hoarders? Our



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experts concur that it sounds like your mom could well be in the early stages of becoming one. This doesn't mean that she will end up storing chicken bones in the bathtub, just that hoarding becomes more common in old age. (Some experts theorize that it's a way older folks deny aging: Objects live on while the body doesn't.) If your mom can't give you a good reason why she is hanging on to the tubes (maybe she's planning to make a cardboard igloo or something?), chances are it's because even she doesn't know why she's doing this. It just feels scary and wrong to her to throw them out.

Hoarding becomes a real problem only if it starts to interfere with the rest of her life. If your mom can still entertain guests, and if her collection isn't cramping her living space, she's OK. But how can you prevent things from getting worse?

Psychologist Margery Segal treats

## THE UPSIDE OF BEING A LITTLE NUTS

**Psychiatrists tell us that all behaviour occurs on a spectrum. For instance, some of us are nagged by occasional worries, while others suffer crippling anxiety attacks. But you may be surprised to learn that certain disorders—as well as milder so-called subclinical symptoms—are often linked to qualities we value as a society. So if you exhibit signs of:**

**OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER You're more likely to be: hardworking and diligent.** People with OCD tend to excel at jobs with strict rules or guidelines that require a high level of conscientiousness. "I have a lot of OCD patients who do well in accounting and business management," says Soroya Bacchus, a psychiatrist in Los Angeles.

**ANXIETY You're more likely to be: compassionate.** Highly anxious people are known for their sensitivity and attentiveness to others. They also tend to be hypervigilant, so they make good surgeons, doctors, dentists, and bankers.

**MILD BIPOLAR DISORDER You're more likely to be: creative.** Many people prone to mood swings are writers, artists, musicians, and performers. "They've got mad flavour," says Dr Bacchus. "When they're manic, they've got an exuberance that's really great, and they can think outside the box."

**ASPERGER SYNDROME You're more likely to be: a problem solver.** Although people with this condition are socially awkward, their intensity of focus steers them towards technology, science, and engineering. "Numbers and concrete science really make sense to them," Dr Bacchus says.

**DEPRESSION You're more likely to be: insightful.** Depressives tend to be more in touch with the deeper truths about themselves, life, and the human experience, experts say.



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hoarders the way she treats those with obsessive-compulsive disorders: by gradually exposing them to the thing they are afraid of, thus robbing it of its panic power. So if your mom freaks out at your suggestion that she throw out all her towel tubes yet finds it pretty easy to get rid of one, you might ask her to discard three—something just beyond her comfort level. The next time, you might ask her to ditch another six. The idea is for your mom to see that the world does not end when she throws out her beloved tubes.

**NORMAL OR NUTS?** I can't have cold drinks or ice water with a meal, because I once read that cold beverages congeal any fats in the stomach. So now I drink only coffee or tea with meals. Also, **I never eat fruits and vegetables at the same meal,** because I read they cause acid imbalances. Am I weird?

**VERDICT**

## Just gullible

Ask a real doctor about how the stomach works, and he or she will tell you (in more scientific language than this) that our innards heat everything up to 98.6 degrees F (body temperature), so forget about "congealing."

The acid imbalance theory is also malarkey. "No matter what foods are in there, the stomach does its job," says Dr Tipton. It is constantly adjusting its acid secretions to maintain a neutral pH level. While you might get indigestion from some foods or a certain combination of them, that seems to be a very "individual thing," Dr Tipton says, and not something automatically caused by eating fruits and vegetables at one meal.

The take-home: Don't believe everything you read—with the exception, of course, of what you read here.

**NORMAL OR NUTS?** When I'm driving and have to cross a bridge, **my heart starts racing and I feel light-headed and panicky.** The fear that I'm going to pass out makes the whole situation worse. Am I crazy?

**VERDICT**

## More like anxious

This sounds like an anxiety attack, says New York psychotherapist Jonathan Alpert. An anxiety attack is a milder version of a panic attack, which can bring on heart palpitations, nausea, dizziness, and a real sense that you are going to die. These attacks are the body's responses to what it perceives as imminent danger. "Somebody who has a true panic attack would turn around and not be able to cross the bridge, because it would disable them so much," says psychologist Hilfer.

You'll be relieved to hear that many folks with anxiety attacks never experience a real panic attack. To keep your anxiety from progressing, try that old standby calming technique: breathing.



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When you feel your heart starting to race, take a deep breath in for a count of three or four, and then let it out for a count of five or six until you start to feel calmer.

Alternatively, you might try Hilfer's visualization strategy: Imagine you are driving down a long passageway with lots of doors. Pass right by the door where you store the anxiety.

Hilfer also tried this with a patient experiencing your exact fear: "We made a tape of his favourite music—we called it The Bridge Tape—and he would sing along as he was going over the bridge." That was enough of a distraction to make the trip bearable. Medications can also help ease anxiety, but for those, you should see a doctor.

**NORMAL OR NUTS?** I often **spin scenarios in my head** in which I become a famous musician or actress and attend my school reunion with fanfare and acclaim. But I don't work in either of those fields and actually have no talent whatsoever. Am I delusional?

**VERDICT**

## No nuttier than others

Are you kidding? Have you noticed that the theme of about half the movies ever made is high school loser/nerd/wallflower turns out to actually be a superhero/knockout/basketball star who learns to dance/defeat the aliens/save the entire homeroom

**"I AM THE WIND BENEATH MY WINGS ..."**

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from nuclear destruction and gets the girl/boy/Nobel Prize just in time to (modestly) enjoy a standing ovation from everyone in the lunchroom, including the principal and the kindly, wise custodian?

"High school is a proving ground," says Danny Jackson, a hypnotherapist. "It's a place where we want to find acceptance. When we're going back in 10 or 15 years, we want to show that we're a success." Daydreaming about that is one of the great pleasures of life—usually a whole lot more fun than the actual reunion.

On the other hand, if you feel you can't return to your reunion because you fear that, in some way, you don't measure up, perhaps you should talk through this issue with a therapist.

**NORMAL OR NUTS?** When I'm with friends or family and someone tells a really good joke or funny story, **I usually laugh until I cry.** I'm not sad, but the tears just flow and flow. I don't know anyone else who does this. What's up with that? It's embarrassing.

**VERDICT**

## Not to worry

You're "completely normal," says Dr Georgiou. "Crying is not a sign of sadness; it's a sign of feeling deep emotion, so it can be triggered by stress, suffering, happiness, or even, in some people, orgasm." In case of the latter, I'll just add my own unscientific suggestion: Make sure your partner knows you're not overwhelmed by grief. Or disappointment. Or even hilarity.

If you are embarrassed by the public tears, however, try this: Prepare yourself not to react that way. The same way that a person can train himself not to kick reflexively when the doctor taps his knee, you can mentally prepare yourself not to cry when you laugh, says Dr Georgiou. But why bother? "I think it is awesome you get so emotional and experience life so fully. It's who you are!" says Dr Georgiou. So be happy about your emotional wiring!

Just not to the point of tears.

**NORMAL OR NUTS?** My teenage son recently told me **he has always felt like he should have been born a girl.** Could he still grow out of that feeling?

**VERDICT**

## Counselling will help

He will probably not outgrow it, says Hilfer. When little kids talk about wanting to be a different gender, "it's not the most unusual thing," he says. "But when a teenager is still saying it, that's probably something the kid is going to struggle with and could use help in figuring out." Hilfer suggests finding your son a therapist who specializes in sexual identity issues.

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A boy's desire to be a different gender is not at all the same as what Hilfer calls homosexual panic, which is experienced by many teens. That's when a boy finds himself admiring another boy—say, the hockey team star—and wonders if it's a sign of something else. "Lots of adolescent boys worry that they're gay. That's pretty normal. Everybody's trying to figure out who they are. But thinking or saying 'I should have been born a girl'—that's more significant. It's something that does happen with many kids who are transgender, and we have to help them."

## BODY BLIPS YOU'RE NUTS TO IGNORE

| SYMPTOM | IT'S NORMAL (and likely due to ...) | IT'S NOT NORMAL (and see a doctor if ...) |
|---|---|---|
| **Shortness of breath** | Emotional upset, to which your body responds with a squirt of adrenaline, resulting in rapid breathing. | You have recurring episodes of rapid, shallow breathing. They could be early warning signs of emphysema, congestive heart failure, or asthma. |
| **Heart palpitations (pounding or racing heart)** | Anxiety or fear, a burst of activity, or too much caffeine. | Your palpitations are accompanied by unusual sweating or dizziness or if you feel frequent extra heartbeats (more than six per minute), indicating arrhythmia. |
| **Hand tremors (particularly when you're at rest)** | Stress or too much caffeine, both of which can overstimulate the neuromuscular system. | The tremors don't stop, indicating possible onset of Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis. Tremor in just one hand could signal damage from stroke. |
| **Bad breath** | Indigestion caused by a "nervous" stomach or gum disease caused by bacteria. | Better dental hygiene (brushing, flossing, mouthwash) doesn't help. Persistent bad breath may be a sign of kidney disease or a lung infection. |
| **Hair loss** | Severe emotional stress (after the loss of a job, say) or physical stress, from surgery or dramatic hormonal changes. | Your hair doesn't start to grow back within a month or two. Diabetes and autoimmune diseases such as lupus can cause hair loss. |



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DAVE WHAMOND

There was an elderly patient on the hospital bed next to mine. One morning, a senior doctor came on his rounds.

"Mr Basu," I heard the doctor say to him. "You will have a sugar-free, salt-free, fat-free and protein-free diet. OK?"

"In that case, Doctor," replied Mr Basu, "why don't you make it a diet-free diet?"

*Thomas Titus,* Bhopal

**At the end** of a crazy day, my husband and I collapsed on our bed and watched TV. As I made myself comfortable in the crook of his arm, I said, "Know what's comforting? When I'm old and grey, I can lean on you, and you'll still feel young and strong. Isn't that wonderful?"

"For you, maybe," he said. "I get the old, shrivelled lady."

*Lisa Lipman*

**I came down** with the flu and wanted my husband to do some of the housecleaning. I wasn't sure how to tell him, so I tried reverse psychology.

"Honey, I'm sorry I'm leaving you with such a mess," I said between sniffles. "The laundry needs to be done, the dishes washed, the floors cleaned."

"Don't you worry," he said sympathetically. "It can all wait until you feel up to it."

*Gail White*

**I asked my eighth graders, "Why are you looking forward to becoming a teenager?" A student answered, "You're treated more like an adult because you are getting closer to adultery."**

*Kelly Thompson*

**"What are those?"** asked my younger sister. She had just spotted the old



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encyclopedias our mother had unearthed in the basement.

Mom tried to explain the concept of an encyclopedia to her, but it just wasn't clicking. She finally blurted out, "It's like Google, but in a book."

*Amber Sandoe*

**Losing my father** was bad enough. So imagine my surprise when I spotted my name in the obituaries instead of his. I had to phone a friend.

"Did you see the report of my death in the paper?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. "Where are you calling from?" *Ralph Warth*

**It was a** Saturday morning, and the lobby of my apartment building was bustling with people coming and going. As the postman arrived, one of my neighbours came barrelling through the lobby, chatting on her cellphone.

Seeing the postman, she yelled across the lobby, "Oh, by the way, I just found out that my husband's magazine subscription expired months ago. So you are right; you haven't been stealing it."

*Bob DeNoia*

**Recently, my** husband was pulled over for not wearing his seat belt. But Irvin was convinced he was being bullied.

"Officer," he said in his most condescending voice. "How do you know I'm not wearing a seat belt when my windows are tinted?"

"Because, sir," replied the officer, "it's hanging out the door."

*Judith Finkler*

## AUTO OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE

Nothing can get a person in trouble faster than a cellphone's autocorrect.

*From damnyouautocorrect.com*

**As a new parent**, I've come to appreciate the sacrifices my mother and father made for me. For example, not long ago, I thanked my mother for all the time and money that was spent on me for orthodontics.

"We had to," she said, "or you would still be living at home."

*Kris Boedigheimer*

**Your anecdote in "Life!" could be worth ₹1000. Post it to the Editorial address or e-mail: editor.india@rd.com**



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# Mom Advice

## For Mother's Day, May 13th, a collection of gems from all over

BY SNIGDHA HASAN

ILLUSTRATED BY JODIE HEWGILL

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The centre of her universe never changes. Putting herself last is second nature to her. No matter how old you grow, she never stops worrying about you—not because you can't take care of yourself, but because she's Mother. And from the bounteous wisdom most mothers share with their children—friendly advice, words of caution, a gentle nudge, a stern look—some words live on forever. For Mother's Day, which falls this month, we asked our readers, acquaintances and website visitors to tell us about the best advice their mothers gave them. Here are some:

## A soothing prayer

As a climate-change campaigner, getting into stressful situations is all in a day's work for 24-year-old Ayesha D'Souza of Delhi. "Raising awareness about environmental issues includes changing people's mindsets as well as negotiating with the government and large corporations—sometimes going against their wishes. When I strive so hard to make a change and don't see my passion rubbing off on others, I get disheartened," she says. That's when Ayesha remembers an old prayer her mother taught her:

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,*
*Courage to change the things I can,*
*And wisdom to know the difference.*

"Just reciting that mentally helps remove the stress and soothe my mind," says Ayesha.

## Never give up

"Back when I was growing up, I would start a task with great enthusiasm but leave it midway and move on to something else," says 23-year-old Suyash Gautam, an Ujjain, MP, businessman.

ILLUSTRATIONS (PAGES 76-80) BY SAMEER KULKARNI



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"It's like I'd start the car, stop en route, blame the roads, the weather and the traffic. Soon I'd start a different car and repeat the same all over again. But I'd be frustrated." Hearing that story of his life, Suyash's mother told him something that has made his days much easier ever since. "Don't worry," she said. "Just start the engine once more. This time though, visualize the end of your journey. The roads, the traffic and the climate may be hideous. But stay focused on the reward your journey is going to yield and the routes shall become pleasant. It's mind over matter. If you don't mind, it won't matter." In 2009, Suyash embarked on writing his first novel and finished it the next year.

"Stay focused on the reward of your journey and the routes shall become pleasant."

SUYASH GAUTAM

## Be there for others

For Laxmi Sivakumar, 36, it was her mother's deeds, more than words, that left an indelible imprint. "As a kid, I'd see her reaching out to others. Amma never hesitated for a moment to say 'Don't worry, I'm with you' and would indeed be there for other people in times of trouble until everything was taken care of," recalls the Kozhikode-based interior designer. Laxmi also learnt from her mother, now 63, that help need not be financial; that emotional and moral support can be important too. "For instance, our new neighbours, not fluent in Malayalam, got inquisitive looks from others," recalls Laxmi, "but Amma went over and tried her best to make them comfortable in their new setting. Today, when in doubt or faced with a difficult situation, I always ask myself 'What would Amma have done?' and I usually get the answer."

## All for the best

A Hindu-Muslim love marriage in 1976 without family support meant building a new life from scratch for Sameer Kulavoor's parents. "Mom endured a hard life giving up her job to be a full-time mother and bringing up three kids. But her optimism and spirit have never taken a beating. During difficult times I have seen her give her best, and when things still don't work out she smiles and says 'It's all for the best'," says Sameer, 28, a visual artist in Mumbai, who a few years ago graduated at the top of his J.J. School of Applied Art class. "Those few words brought a sense of calm, and I have grown up on that advice. It not only helps me keep my cool in hard times, but brings great strength



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> "Never postpone expressing appreciation of others."
> DR RASHMI CHATURVEDI

and optimism, and makes me look beyond the hurdles," says Sameer, now director of Bombay Duck Designs, the company he set up.

## No favours

In a world where *whom* you know often becomes more consequential than *what* you are, Manisha Mishra* was encouraged to swim against the tide. "Mother told me that I should never take advantage of Papa's position. And that unless it was absolutely necessary, I should avoid telling others that he is a superintendent of police, since it could lead to people treating me preferentially," says nine-year-old Manisha, a fourth-standard student.

## Have a heart

"During my cousin's wedding reception party, two not-too-well-fed gatecrashers were happily enjoying their dinner. When I walked up to them and asked them in a low voice to leave the place, they acknowledged it but continued eating as if nothing had happened," says S.K. Dutta, 42, of Meerut, UP. "I couldn't show my anger there and decided to step away. I didn't know that my mother was watching me. She simply smiled and said, 'Let them eat and fill their bellies. There's plenty.' Hearing that, I felt small, mean, uneducated and ignorant, but it taught me about understanding others who may be different from me."

## Improve your argument

For Mumbai-based Ria Kudukar, 23, a fight in school led to a precious piece of advice that's proving useful even today. "When my mother learnt that I had yelled at another girl during the fight, she said, 'Ria, don't raise your voice, improve your argument instead. Anybody can scream but very few can capture attention'," Ria recalls. Later, as an advertising copywriter—a job she held until recently—and as a fledgling businesswoman today, a primary task, Ria explains, has been to capture attention. "I know that screaming does not work."

## Let go

Savitri Babulkar grew up with her cousins in a joint family in South Canara, Karnataka. Having lost her mother when she was just a year old, it was her grandmother who brought

* Name changed on request.



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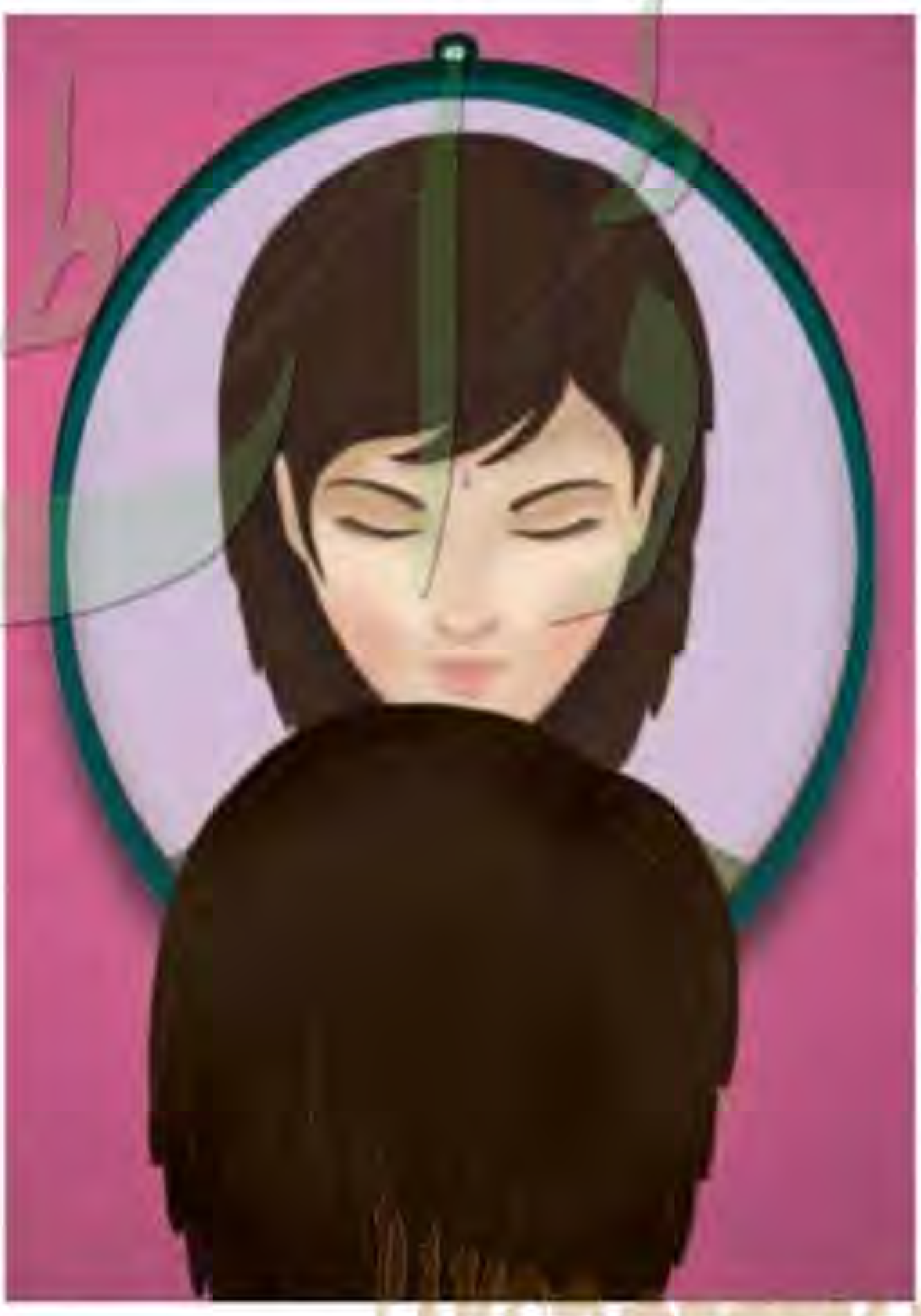
her up. “One day, Granny called us to watch the boys learning to cycle in the front yard,” recalls Savitri. “We saw them wobble precariously while an adult held firmly on to the back of the bike’s seat.” Savitri watched as her grandma, no cyclist herself, occasionally called out to the trainer to let go of the seat. And turning round, she’d explain how learning to let go was crucial to any kind of training. A retired teacher and now a grandma herself, Savitri, 75, says she used the advice to raise both her children to become self-confident and independent.

## Talk about this

Niyati Duggal, 19, a Delhi-based BA English literature student, learnt very early in life about something most parents find awkward to talk about. “When I was entering my teens, my mother sat me down and talked to me about sexual abuse,” she says. Her mother said: If somebody touches you inappropriately and you don’t like it, never hesitate to tell me about it immediately. Don’t stay silent whoever the person may be. Niyati insists this is something every child needs to know.

## Respect yourself

“I was feeling low after my 10th standard results were declared because I didn’t score as well as my cousins did,” says Swati Khatri, 27, of Delhi. After the results, Swati started doubting her capabilities, but then came the biggest lesson of her life. “You may not be good at one thing,” her mother told her, “but you are great at so many other things. You’ll never be able to respect anyone until you fully respect yourself.” Swati eventually learnt to be brave enough to make her own decisions and trust her inner self. She continued studying hard and even got a post-graduate business diploma. Recently, she left her job as a retail management trainee and joined a creative writing course. “I left the rat-race,” she says “and I’m pursuing what I always wanted to. I don’t know where it will take me.” But Swati has hope—because, she says, “I respect myself and whatever I do.”





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packed with peace and I've tried to follow the advice all my life."

## Even her absence is a lesson

"From keeping house to maintaining relationships, I learnt everything from the way my mother did things," says Dr Rashmi Chaturvedi, 46, of Aurangabad, Maharashtra. "But when my little sons kiss me good night or thank me, I regret the fact that I never told Mummy what she meant to me, never kissed her or told her I loved her. I just hope she always knew that. So even her absence today is a lesson. I never postpone expressing my appreciation of others."

## Forgive and forget

The best bit of advice Dr Hemalatha Somsekhar got from her mother was short and simple. "Her two favourite words were Forgive and Forget," says the physician who grew up in different parts of the world, she being the daughter of a diplomat. "They're

**Tell us about a similar anecdotal bit of fine advice you got from your mother. We just might publish it for Mother's Day, next year. Write to the Editorial address or e-mail: editor.india@rd.com**

### A THOROUGH JOB

**My forgetful husband** wears a hearing aid. Once, Claude mistakenly left it in the pocket of his shirt, which went in the washing machine. He called the hearing centre to see if the drowned apparatus could be fixed.

"Dry it thoroughly," the receptionist instructed, "then bring it in."

"Oh, that's no problem!" Claude replied. "I put it in the dryer too."

*Ruth O'Hara*



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# Off Base

## HUMOUR IN UNIFORM

I arrived in Texas on a warm autumn day, ready to begin my tour as an exchange student from the Canadian armed forces. When I met the commanding officer, he pointed out how lucky I was to be in his state at this time of year.

"Yes, sir," I agreed, "the weather here is much better than back in Ontario."

"Weather?" said the colonel. "I'm talking about football season!"

*Michael Kyte*

**One night,** at our Air Force Base, I was dispatched to the runway security fence, where an alarm had gone off. I soon found the culprit—a raccoon. So I ran around, flapping my arms to scare it away.

Suddenly, an air-traffic controller came over the public-address system: "Attention to the airman at the end of the runway. You are cleared for takeoff." From *gcfl.net*

**As a dental** officer in the Air Force, I was treating a recruit. As he lay prone in the chair, I asked him a question about his pain level. He responded, "Yes."

"Yes is not enough," I said.

With that, he leaped out of the chair, stood at attention, and shouted, "Yes, sir!" *Dr Douglas C. Boyd*

*"I hate the beach. No one salutes me."*

**Just after** he was posted to a remote field station where ration supplies were irregular, my husband found himself alone in the officers' mess. When he asked the waiter to serve him half-boiled eggs for breakfast, he was advised to have an omelette instead. "Why?" asked my husband.

"Because," the waiter explained, "then you don't come to know that the eggs are rotten."

*Kokil Paul,* Pune

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ILLUSTRATED BY BOB VOJTKO



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1.

PHOTOS: COURTESY JAMES CORBETT

Self-taught Australian sculptor James Corbett has reinvented his life and found an appreciative international audience, thanks to an eye for the possibilities presented by others' discards

BY HAZEL FLYNN

# SHIFTING GEARS

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1. **ORANGUTAN:** "The front on that is a 1938 De Soto grille," says the sculptor, Corbett. "It weighs a tonne!"
2. **WARTHOG:** Timing chains make for the perfect flowing mane.
3. **TOUCAN:** Creative use of an old headlight.



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**At the beginning of 1999,** James Corbett was a car-wrecker with no art experience beyond schoolbook doodles. Six months later he had exhibited in three cities, and a year after that was a full-time sculptor. Now his works, made exclusively from car parts, sell on three continents for up to $30,000 apiece.

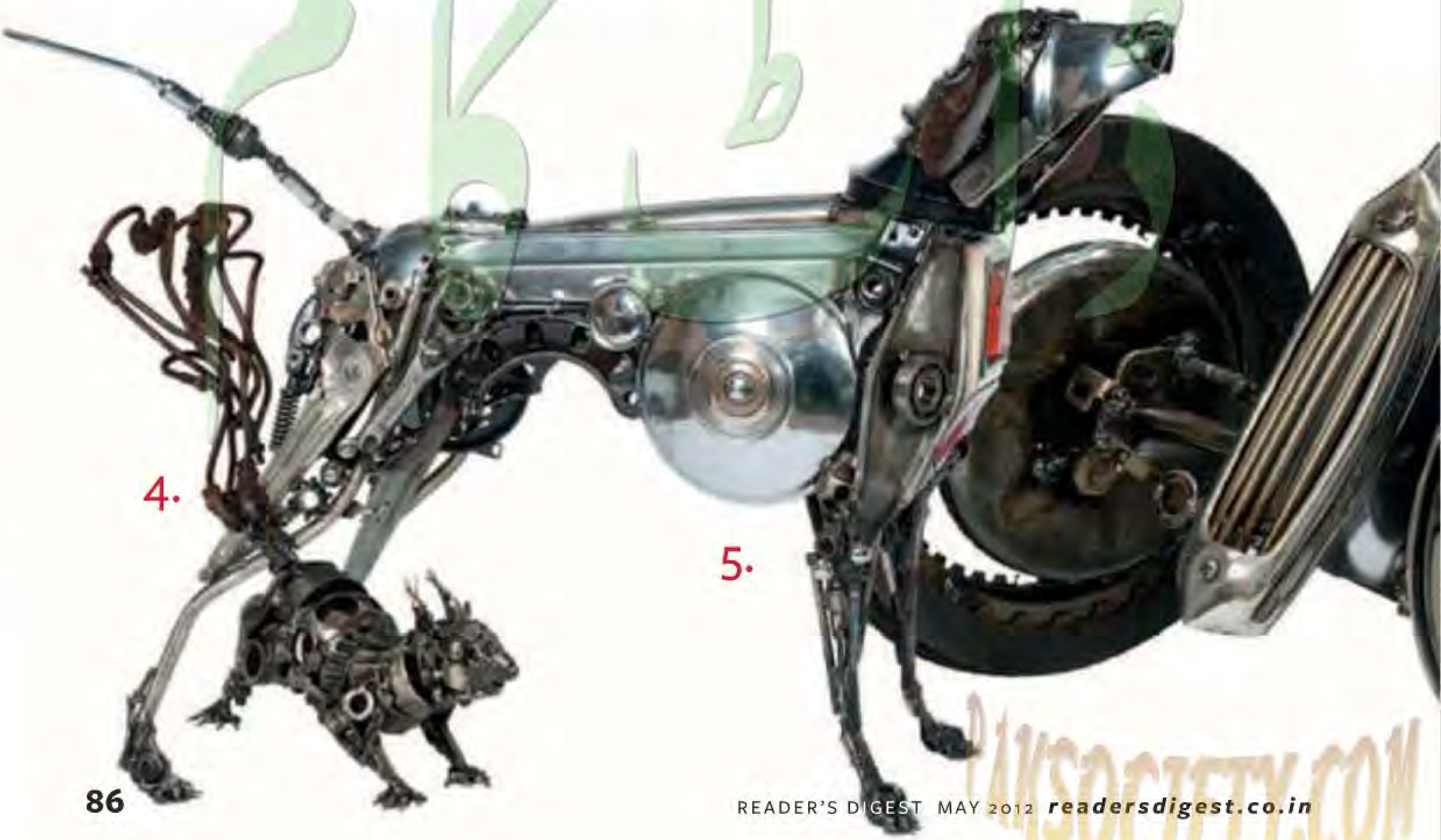
The trigger for this life-change was an act of generosity. "I'd given a fellow some parts for his car for a charity rally," says Corbett, 49. "He came back in with a trophy he'd won—just some gears welded together. He left it on the counter for a few weeks, to say thank you. I was walking past it and I thought, *I can do better than that*." So he did.

James started off tentatively, after rummaging for useful parts at the French-car wreckers he ran with wife Jodie, but his confidence and skills developed quickly. "People responded well and I enjoyed it. Perhaps out of ignorance, because I didn't know anything about the art world, I thought, *I'm going to see what I can do with this*."

His first showing, at a car-themed Brisbane cafe, not far from his home,

4. & 5. **SQUIRREL AND LURCHER:** Animals are a favourite theme, as here with *Squirrel* and *Lurcher*. A lurcher is a mix of two different breeds of dog, one of which is usually a greyhound. "Because of poaching, greyhounds were made illegal at some point in the past in England. So people would cross-breed a greyhound with something else, making it legal to own and that was a lurcher."

6. **WORKS AUSTIN:** While his animal depictions tend towards lifesize, Corbett's cars—such as this Austin 7 Twin Cam Racer, end up around 1/6 scale. *Works Austin* is a tribute to "a car I liked, made by the Austin racing team."



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# "I GO TO A FAIR BIT OF EFFORT TO TRY TO FIND THE OLD STUFF BECAUSE IT HAS MORE CHARACTER. NEW CARS DON'T HAVE MUCH CHROME."

6.

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was a one-night-only affair, but it was a hit. A third of the works on display sold. More importantly, it led to an invitation to exhibit at the Brisbane Motor Show and to commissions from car dealers and manufacturers (among others, Toyota commissioned a shark sculpture to present to golfer Greg Norman). He also showed his works in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

By mid-2000, "I was probably making as much money from sculpting as I was from the wrecking business," James says. Even so, the decision to become a full-time artist was "scary." Fortunately, he says, "It's worked."

The sculptures take between a day

7.

7. **WALKING MISS DAISY:** It's the spark plug sweater that really makes this ensemble.

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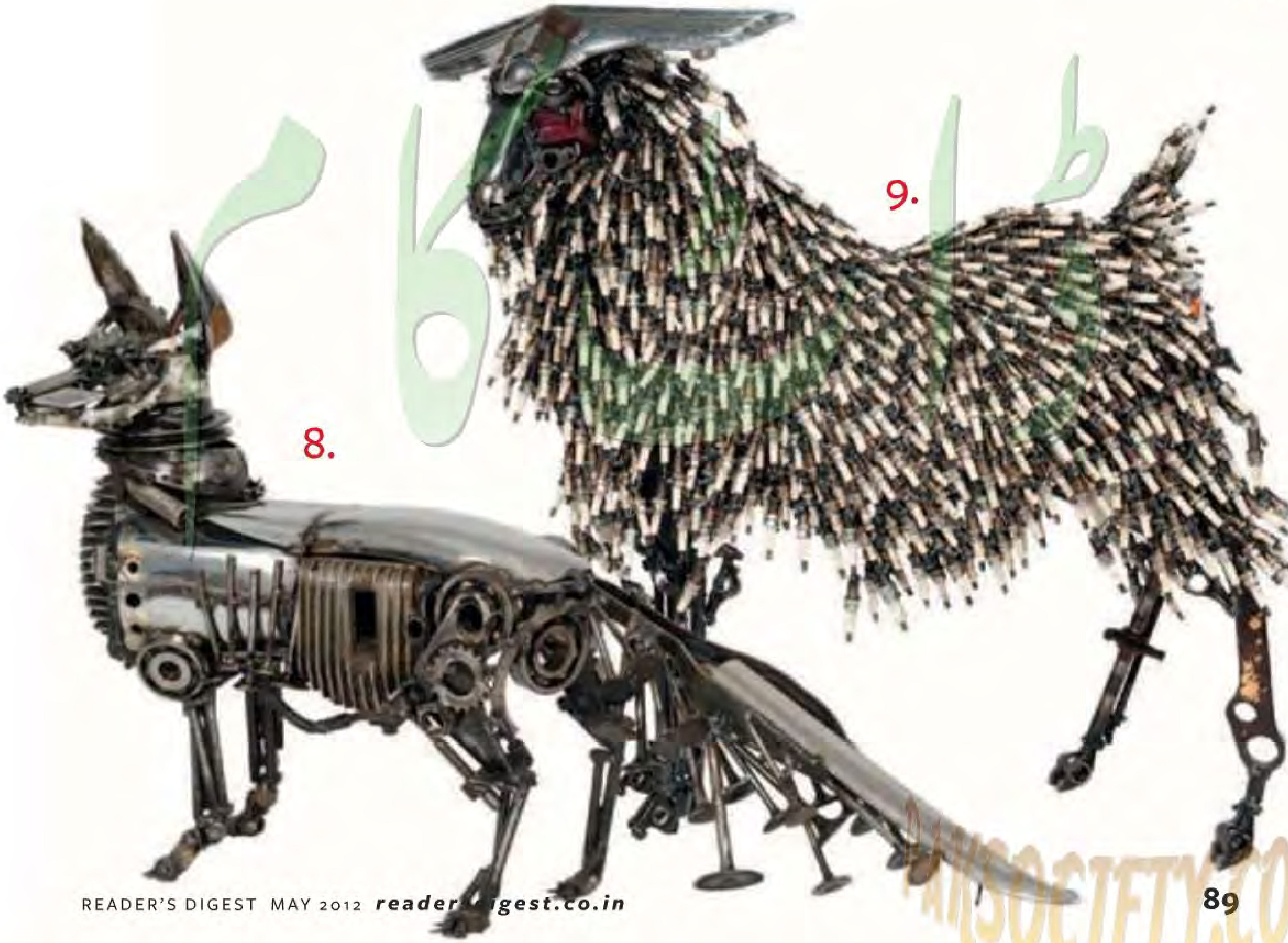
and several months to complete and prices start at around $2000. Raw materials are becoming harder to find: "A lot of what I use is older," he says. "I go to a fair bit of effort to try to find that stuff because it has more character. New cars don't have much chrome: the bumper bars are plastic, the headlights are plastic."

James has exhibited successfully three times in Britain and once in California. Shows in both regions are again scheduled for later this year. But he's not resting on his laurels. "You get better and better over time because you get harder on yourself. You have to be your own toughest critic."

**James welds in his factory workshop in Ningi, north of Brisbane. "My head's full of the parts I've got and the possibilities," he says.**

8. & 9. **FOX AND GOAT:** *Goat* is made almost entirely of spark plugs, much like the hat and sweater of the life-size human from *Walking Miss Daisy*, while *Fox* stands sleek and proud.



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Six climbers were trapped high on a deadly mountain. It would take a never-before-attempted helicopter mission to reach them

# RESCUE ATT OF THE

**Richard Lehner** and Captain Daniel Aufdenblatten's trip in April 2010 to Kathmandu, Nepal, had been fairly undramatic by their standards. The pair, who worked for Swiss mountain-rescue firm Air Zermatt, had spent a few days teaching local rescue group Fishtail Air the "long-line method"—Zermatt's pioneering technique that allows a man dangling underneath a small helicopter to pluck climbers from high-altitude rock faces. The two-month training program planned by the pilot and rescue expert would be risky—the method requires pilots to control their craft in turbulent air too thin to lift large winch helicopters. But it made a change from their day job, rescuing injured climbers in the Alps.

Then, late on the morning of April 28, as they returned from a trip to Everest Base Camp with Sabin Basnyat, Fishtail's captain, a member of the ground crew rushed over to meet their helicopter. Sabin translated the urgent message. "We've received a distress call from a Spanish expedition on Annapurna. They're stuck above 6400 metres and one of them is missing."

The six-man team had reached the top of the 8091-metre peak at around

BY ELLIE ROSE ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY MATT KENDALL
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MENNO BOERMANS



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# THE ROOF WORLD

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4pm the previous day, but had been plagued by strong winds and blizzards on their way down. The only amateur climber in the group, 39-year-old father-of-two Tolo Calafat, had fallen behind, and Sonam, the Sherpa who'd initially stayed with him, had had to abandon him at 7468 metres, when he was too exhausted to go any further.

**Missing: Spanish climber Tolo Calafat.**

The others—world-class climbers Carlos Pauner and Juanito Oiarzabal, Romanian Horia Colibasanu and Dawa Sherpa—had struggled on to their camp at 6950 metres in fading light, desperate to spend the night as far down the mountain as possible to avoid fatal altitude sickness.

But, by morning, Juanito's feet were partially frozen, Carlos's hands were frostbitten, they'd lost radio contact with Tolo, and the entire group were exhausted and snow blind, with the Europeans showing early signs of altitude sickness. What's more, there were reports of avalanches further down the mountain.

*We're screwed,* 54-year-old Juanito thought to himself.

**On the ground,** details of the men's situation were sketchy, but Daniel, 35, realized it must be dire. *They'll know a chopper rescue has never been done at that height,* he thought. *Yet they called us anyway.*

As well as the thin air and the resulting loss of power at such altitude, unpredictable air currents could dash a helicopter into the rock face, and it could also be dangerous for pilots to rise so high without acclimatization. Even Fishtail's high-altitude Ecureuil AS 350 B3 chopper wasn't licensed to fly above 7010 metres.

"It's going to be very hard," said Richard, 38. "But we're here and, in theory, we have the knowledge to do it. Let's just see..."

The two men loaded the helicopter with fuel and rescue equipment, and headed for Annapurna Base Camp, 161 km west.

Time was of the essence—the climbers could fall victim to cerebral or pulmonary edemas (the deadly later stage of altitude sickness) at any moment. But, by the time Richard and Daniel had arrived at the camp at around 3pm, a thick mist had rolled in—mists usually appeared in late morning at this time of year, and hung around all day. Flying further up the mountain was now impossible. The Spanish team would have to spend another sleepless night in temperatures below minus 10°C.

**Early next morning,** backed by blue skies, the Spanish expedition's support team updated the rescuers. Dawa had spent the night looking for Tolo, but had returned to his companions in tears. The Spaniard was nowhere to be found, possibly covered by snow and probably dead.


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Richard (*left*) and Daniel knew that no rescue chopper had ever flown this high.

## THE BEAST OF THE EAST

Annapurna is actually the name given to a series of peaks in the **Himalayas**, a massif, the highest point of which is Annapurna I (which the Spanish team climbed), standing at 8091 metres—the tenth tallest mountain on earth. It was first conquered by Louis Lachenal and Maurice Herzog in **June 1950**. But, though it was the first of the world's 14 mountains over 7925 metres to be summited, it's still the least climbed. Frequent avalanches and ice falls make it incredibly dangerous, and around four in ten climbers who try for the summit lose their lives.

"Let's go up and see if we can locate him anyway," said Daniel. At 7am, with an estimated three-hour rescue win dow until more mist rolled in, Richard and Daniel hopped into the Ecureuil.

As Daniel took the craft higher, he began to appreciate Annapurna's terrifying beauty. *It's amazing*, he thought. *So steep. If I fly out only 50 metres from the rock face, there's over 3000 metres of nothing to the ground!*

After 20 minutes in the air, there was no sign of Tolo. But they spotted the climbers' camp in the distance.

"It's on a steep slope," said Richard. "There's no chance we can land."

Strong winds had started buffeting the helicopter violently. "We're like a punchbag up here," said Daniel. They'd have to turn back.

At Base Camp, Sherpas brought tea for the two men as they discussed their options. Perhaps they could drop

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oxygen and medicine to help the climbers overcome their altitude sickness. Maybe some Sherpas could go up and help them down. But both options required time the climbers probably didn't have.

Daniel paused. "I think the wind has died down," he said. Then it came to him: if they stripped the helicopter to make it as light as possible, they might be able to attempt a long-line rescue—the technique they'd come here to teach.

It would be very risky—no one had ever performed it at anything like this altitude. *But you go out and you try,* thought Daniel. Richard, who would be dangling on a rope 28 metres below the helicopter, agreed.

**It was 8am now** and the mist was no more than a couple of hours away, so Richard and Daniel emptied charts, spare oil, headsets and even screwdrivers from the helicopter, and quickly took off. The pair agreed to maintain constant radio contact to check each other's safety, but there were no guarantees. *Still,* thought Daniel, *If I feel worried or doubtful now, I'm in the wrong job.*

Rotating slowly in his harness, far below the helicopter, Richard took in a fabulous 360-degree view—and the ever-growing drop beneath. Breathing through an oxygen tube to stave off altitude sickness, he could feel the sub-zero strong winds knifing through his clothes. After just ten minutes in the air, his tight harness began cutting off the circulation to his lower body and he had to swing his legs to keep his blood flowing. He tried to keep his eyes peeled to relocate the camp.

Suddenly, the huddle of tents swam into view. They were framed on the left by a steep rock face and a sheer cliff on the right. There was

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little margin for error if Daniel was to steer Richard safely onto the slope.

One of the climbers stood outside the tents, staring at the helicopter, but the other men stayed in the relative warmth. Their back-up team had told them the Swiss were in the area, but the climbers weren't sure they could reach them. Anyway, the probable loss of their friend Tolo curtailed any possible euphoria.

Richard began directing Daniel towards the slope. Swinging 30 metres from the mountainside, he could only trust that his pilot was skilled enough in the gales to keep him from smashing into the rock. Any miscalculation would be hard to correct.

"What's the height?" asked Daniel.

"About 50 metres," replied Richard.

"How about now, Richi?"

Suddenly, the helicopter bounced on the wind and Richard found himself tossed around, swinging towards the wall of rock and back out again.

**UNPREDICTABLE AIR CURRENTS COULD DASH A HELICOPTER INTO THE ROCK FACE.**

*Concentrate!* Daniel urged himself, and pulled away from the mountain. He moved in again. The wind held off and Richard counted down: "Two metres, 1.5, one...touching!"

But, as Richard started to survey his surroundings, Daniel suddenly felt uneasy.

"I don't like it," he said. "I'm going to lift you up again." Daniel always felt you had to rely on your instincts



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## THE HEIGHT OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE

**Air Zermatt** is known as one of the world's leading aerial-rescue organizations, largely thanks to its **long-line** rescue method.

The technique was developed in the 1980s and has been used by Zermatt about 10,000 times. Ropes as long as **213 metres** have saved people everywhere from rock faces to stricken cable cars.

Captain Daniel Aufdenblatten and Richard Lehner were given the **Heroism Award** by *Aviation Week* magazine in March 2011 for their rescue. The winner for the year 2010 was Captain Chesley Sullenberger, who famously landed a crippled Airbus A320, carrying 150 passengers, on the Hudson River in New York.

when flying—and, within seconds, he was proved right.

"I have only ten minutes of oxygen left," said Richard. There was no way he could stay on the mountain—he'd soon be totally disorientated.

They returned to Base Camp and replaced the oxygen bottle. There was now less than an hour and a half before the mist rolled in, so they immediately flew back up Annapurna. But the wind was blowing so forcefully in Richard's face that the air was escaping from his breathing tube faster than he could inhale it. "I'm not feeling good," he gulped.

"This is going nowhere," replied Daniel, and tilted the helicopter back towards Base Camp once more.

**Richard and Daniel** realized they were wasting too much time making failed attempts. If the clouds overtook them, the climbers would probably have to spend a third night on the mountain, and what were the odds they'd survive that?

Daniel had another idea. What if he flew up alone and the climbers clipped themselves onto the line? He'd never performed a rescue like this before—let alone at such altitude—and the climbers were exhausted, ill and had frostbitten fingers.

"But these are experienced mountaineers, not tourists on a hiking trail,"

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Daniel reasoned. And, anyway, there was little choice. So the ground team relayed instructions to the climbers, and Daniel set off.

Ten minutes later, he was hovering over the camp again. He slowly aimed the karabiner hook on the end of the rope towards Juanito Oiarzabal's outstretched hand, checking his power readings and battling the wind all the while. The pressure was intense. Without Richard guiding him from below the aircraft, the heavy karabiner swung from side to side—one wrong move and it could hit Juanito.

But Daniel told himself to focus and, a few seconds later, the climber was clipped in. Juanito had climbed all 14 of the world's highest mountains a world-record total of 26 times, but he never thought he'd have to descend dangling in the air like this. Still, exhausted and freezing, he surrendered himself to Daniel's expertise and, ten minutes later, he was back at Base Camp, where he was whisked off by doctors.

**Daniel set off again** with the mist now less than 40 minutes away—each rescue was taking some 20 minutes.

The two Sherpas were refusing to leave without their equipment and were too scared to go on the rope, but Daniel had no time to argue. He picked up Horia and Carlos and took them back to Base Camp—then saw the clouds encircling Annapurna. The two Sherpas would have to climb down the next day. But, he reasoned, they were far less prone to altitude sickness—they'd probably be OK.

Richard had shaken the hands of the climbers as each had returned, but they didn't approach Daniel when he got out of the helicopter. *Maybe they feel awkward,* he shrugged. Rescuees rarely came to thank him afterwards—and they had just lost a friend.

Instead, Daniel sat down to more tea, relieved and happy. He'd just done something extraordinary—the highest-ever helicopter rescue in history, at 6950 metres. "Don't get the wrong idea about it," he reflects now, modestly. "We were asked to do something that was our job, basically."

*The two Sherpas returned safely the next day, and the three European climbers made a full recovery from the effects of altitude sickness and frostbite. Tolo Calafat was declared dead on April 29, probably from a cerebral edema.*

---

## TOPSY TURVY

**Last autumn** the handle broke off my husband's golf umbrella. This spring, we got caught in a shower our first time out. He pulled out the umbrella and was surprised to see the handle broken as he swore he'd fixed it. I looked more carefully and, sure enough, he had. The handle was back—on the wrong end.

*Cynthia Ludkin*



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# MY MUM'S SECRET LIFE

## Call it 'parental controls,' but I'm the one who's spying on my mother's online activities

BY MELISSA SHULTZ

**I was certain** I knew everything there was to know about my mother.

She watches the detective TV show *Bones* twice a day, hates board games and bland food, loves coral lipstick, Hollywood tell-all books and George Clooney. She has no qualms about telling a brain surgeon how the ganglia really work, and goes to the movies with her sidekick Marilyn. I know this stuff because we talk by phone, every week. That, and my sister fills me in.

It wasn't always this way. When I was a teenager, we spoke very little. I believed that she could never understand what it was like to be a kid. Now a parent myself, the mirror has flipped. At least my generation has tools to help bridge the gap—tools like Google and social networks.

**I want to know, but I dare not ask. After all, I am spying. So I go further undercover.**

When I joined Facebook, I took every security measure possible. It was months before I added a photo, then several more weeks before I sent friend requests. One day, I found myself looking up everyone I've ever known, including my mother. To my surprise, I discovered she has a Facebook page with a photo that makes her look coy, even playful!

How could this be? My mother is not playful; she is my mother.



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She makes chicken soup and tells me how to get stains out of tablecloths.

Who took that photo? People writing on her wall? I wanted to know, but I didn't ask. Instead, I went with the flow and Googled her.

**What about the parent with a nosy kid? Can you blame anyone for looking?**

And up came her name. Seems my mother has finally found an outlet for her commentary. She reviews books online, mostly titles with dark, tawdry themes. Pity the authors she doesn't care for; the word "annoying" comes up more than once in her reviews, some of which are picked up by other sites and reverberate across the Internet.

But books are only the beginning. She belongs to several "meet-up groups." What are these? On one of the sites, she answers the profile question: Which of these words best describes you? *Talker. Listener. Icebreaker.* She replies *All*. Then she adds that in her opinion, people are defined by their experiences. Some of which I find on another site. These lead me to The Bomb: my mother is on an online dating network.

Her code name—is that what you call it?—let's just say, think *Gone with the Wind*. Why did she pick *that*? I want to know, but I dare not ask. After all, I am spying. Instead, I go further undercover and register to read more. And there she is in living colour, my mother, looking for "a date, a friend, an activity partner," noting that she raised a family (finally, something I do know), has had several "vocations," and now watches her grandkids with "great amusement." What does that even mean?

When I get to the part about how she likes "witty dialogue with dinner," I find myself wishing it weren't noon so that I could swish back a glass of wine. Now I'm certain I've been talking to someone else's mother, not mine, for all these years. The woman who thought my father hung the moon is saying, *Bring it on. I'm ready*.

There's more. She enters writing competitions, and answers trivia questions. Online. With the computer my brother gave her.

"Have you Googled Mum?" I asked him soon after.

"Why would I Google Mum?" he answers—a man who, when Googled, fills up dozens of pages and who lives only minutes from our mother.

Thousands of kilometres from his home, using my computer, I show him. He laughs till he can't speak.

The thing is: where do I go from here? Just because I can, is it right to keep tabs on my mother? Really, the whole concept behind "parental controls" on the Internet needs to be

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rethought. Who are the controls for? The parent, or the kid with the nosy parent? What about the parent with a nosy kid? Can you blame anyone for looking? And if you don't look and you miss something big, how awful would you feel later?

Would she have met new people and stayed connected to her peers using the phone and snail mail? I'd say, no way. And from everything I've read, the older you get, the more important it is to have friendships and hobbies. As I approach my 50th birthday, I can't help but wonder how the Internet will someday affect my relationship with my own kids. Will we talk to one another differently? Share more? Will they like the new me or prefer the me they thought they knew?

But mostly I wonder whether the Internet can take credit for people like my mother creating new versions of themselves, or whether that new version has been there all along, and I just never thought to ask.

When she comes to visit this weekend, I will—face to face. I just hope she'll send me a friend request when she gets back home.

## YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM

**Aged 71, I was** waiting for a prescription in the pharmacy and sat beside two children whose mother was being served. "Hello," said the girl. "My name's Bethany and I'm three." Her brother added, "My name's Travis and I'm four."

I replied, "My name's Ron and I'm five." Bethany screamed with laughter and said, "You're not."

"OK," I said. "I'm six."

"You're not," Bethany screeched again, so I said, "Well how old am I?" At that point, Travis butted in curtly, "A hundred?" *Ron Ross*

**At the first** parent-teacher meeting I realized that my first-grader daughter had her own ideas about school. While her classmates try to beat each other in answering the teacher, she maintains an Olympic calm. When the teacher asked Lena why she doesn't raise her hand to answer, Lena replied: "There's nothing I want to ask you." *Sergey Yermakov*

**We used to** spell certain words when three-year-old "Miss Big Ears" was around and abbreviated some so that she wouldn't understand. For example, lollies became "lol" or biscuits "bis."

One day when I wasn't feeling the best, my husband brought me a cup of coffee. Marching behind him carrying the biscuit tin came our daughter, asking, "Would you like a 'bis' with it, Mum?" *Margaret Ritchie*



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# Bored of the

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# Rings?

**Are the Olympics in desperate need of a clean and jerk? David Thomas puts the torch to the events that are getting longer, duller, and harder to watch**

ILLUSTRATED BY MAGGIE LI

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**On 27 July, 2012,** the eyes of the world will be focused on Britain's capital for the opening ceremony of the London Olympic Games, when an estimated 10,500 competitors from more than 200 countries will prepare to battle for the 302 gold medals on offer across 26 Olympic sports.

The star-power of Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt has inspired more than a million ticket applications for the men's 100m final alone, while the number of TV viewings for the two-week sportfest is expected to hit five billion.

The Olympics can reasonably claim to be the biggest and most popular show on earth. Yet I believe it could be made even better by dropping several sports from the line-up and radically changing the rules of others.

The five core disciplines of athletics, swimming, gymnastics, fencing and cycling have featured at every Olympiad since 1896. Others have come and gone. Croquet and water motorsports have each made a single appearance. Both softball and baseball appeared in the 1990s, only to be dropped after 2008. Golf appeared in 1904 and 1908 and will return in 2016.

**Among** the practical reasons for change is the growing dominance of the Olympics as a television event. Income from broadcasters and sponsors is vital—and the demands of commercial channels for frequent advertising breaks require shorter, sharper, faster forms of sport.

And then there are the demands of a global TV audience who may not know the players or understand the rules of many sports. Above all, they want to be entertained.

In 1992, for example, beach volleyball was introduced. It proved so popular that the best tickets for the women's final this year were priced at £450, a price exceeded only by key events at the athletics stadium. While it's not one of the world's top sports, the competitors are tall, sexy girls jumping around in bikinis. It tells us that Olympic sports can be introduced on what one might politely call esthetic grounds. Beach volleyball is the *Baywatch* of the Olympics.

One candidate for readmission to the Games, since its solitary inclusion in 1900, is cricket. Until recently, its exclusion could be justified on the grounds that the game can be played for days without producing a result. For the uninitiated, it was baffling and about as exciting as watching paint dry. But things have changed.

Now, Twenty20 that boils all the key elements into two-and-a-half hours' play. Crowds love it. Even diehard traditionalists admit it has forced players to reach new levels of athleticism. They are faster, stronger and hit the ball higher (and further) than before. What could be more Olympian?

The Olympic motto is "Citius, Altius, Fortius," Latin for "faster, higher, stronger." It describes a striving to be the absolute best. And that is what the ideas that follow—some radical, eccentric or just plain crazy—are striving for, too.



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# Let's get rid of...

## DRESSAGE

It's easy to understand a race or appreciate the skill of a gymnastic routine. But the baffling subtleties of dressage are intended to show off a rider's skill and a horse's good training.

It is, in other words, a dog show for horses. And although the sight of an immaculately dressed rider atop a magnificent horse is very pleasing, it is as irrelevant as the sight of an owner walking round a ring with a dog on a leash would be.

## MODERN PENTATHLON

Modern pentathlon involves the five disciplines of fencing, pistol-shooting, swimming, showjumping and cross-country running. It was devised by the French pedagogue and historian Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the driving force behind the first modern Olympics. The idea was to test the skills of a 19th-century cavalry soldier. But this is not the 19th century, and there are no cavalry soldiers any more.

**Beach volleyball is the *Baywatch* of the Olympics.**

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## GRECO-ROMAN WRESTLING

The clue is in the name: "Greco-Roman." Wrestling is, like throwing the discus and javelin, among the sports that date back to the start of the classical Olympics, some 2700 years ago. More than 50 nations compete in Olympic wrestling. But if you were starting the Games today and looking for the best way to present wrestling, you'd leave Greco-Roman wrestling to the Ancient Greeks and Romans.

## SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING

Come on, this isn't a sport. Putting on make-up, choosing a glittery swimming costume and smiling should all be irrelevant to Olympic competition. If you have synchronized swimming, you might as well have pole-dancing, too. And yes, pole-dancers have already asked to be considered for the Olympics.

## SOCCER

True, this is the world's most popular sport, but the Olympic version fails to meet the needs of its television audience.

Olympic athletes are supposed to be the absolute best, yet the men's teams are composed of under-23 players, plus three over-age participants, so many of the greatest stars will be missing.

And though an Olympic medal should be the greatest of all sporting achievements, an Olympic gold medal ranks, at best, fourth for a male soccer player, after the World Cup and any of the major national leagues.

If soccer were to stay, it should follow the example of rugby, which will return in 2016 in its Rugby Sevens format. Seven players, rather than 15, compete in matches that are 14 minutes long. The result is a fast, dramatic contest in which an entire tournament can be staged at a single stadium in just two or three days.

Much the same could be done for soccer. Hold five-a-side games, cut to a 20-minute length, played in an indoor arena. That's intense for players, exciting for fans, and uniquely Olympian.

Or we could follow the lead of FIFA president Sepp Blatter, who called for Beach Soccer to be introduced in 2016. Of course, he was asking for it to be added in addition to conventional soccer—but let's just go to the beach and forget the grass game for a while!

**If you have synchronized swimming, you might as well have pole-dancing, too.**

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# Let's overhaul these sports completely...

## TRACK CYCLING

Cycling has everything you would want in an Olympic sport: speed, excitement and athletic prowess. But I cannot watch the individual sprint, which is ruined by each cyclist's desire to be behind the other, in his or her slipstream, before the final dash to the line. A race that should be about speed is thus incredibly slow for most of its length as the two competitors jockey for position.

This is absurd. Usain Bolt does not spend the first 85m of the 100m walking as slowly as possible. Michael Phelps does not tread water for a few minutes before beginning the freestyle. They go at top speed from start to finish. Cyclists should do the same.

There should either be a minimum time mandated, or else they should race the way sprinters, swimmers and rowers do: side-by-side in a straight line. That way, in true Olympic style, we will discover who can go faster than the rest.

## BOXING

Boxing is one of the very few Olympic sports that still retains the old amateur tradition. Fights are limited to just four rounds of two minutes each, making the tournament much quicker to complete. Above all, fighters wear padded headgear to protect them from the long-term brain damage that repeated punches to the head can cause.

Here's where the Olympics could lead the way. If the boxers want to fight more safely, they should do something else: fight with bare knuckles. Bare-knuckle fights are illegal in most countries, but it has long been clear that the reason boxers cause one another such harm is that they wear gloves.

Gloves enable boxers to hit much harder, leading to the slamming of the brain back-and-forth against the inside of the skull that is the most dangerous aspect of boxing.

Without gloves, the ability to hit is

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limited by the fact that a hard blow to the skull can severely injure knuckles.

Bare-knuckle boxing has a savage, uncivilized reputation and might seem an odd fit for the Olympics. It can, after all, leave lips split and noses broken. But, unless boxing is banned altogether, it is better for the boxers' battered brains.

## SHOOTING

There may be something more boring to watch than a middle-aged man wearing spectacles covered in bits of cardboard, firing at a stationary, monochrome target, but I can't imagine what it is. Shooting needs a good geeing-up. So why not update things? You could have team paintball fights that test shooting ability, tracking and camouflage. A serious, long-range sniper contest (against dummy targets, rather than humans, of course) would be sure to grab people's attention.

And finally, why not transform console shooting games, specially commissioned from the makers of *Call of Duty* or *Grand Theft Auto*, into Olympic disciplines? Former F1 driver David Coulthard has already raced a real Mercedes against PlayStation gamers "driving" the same car around the same circuit. Why shouldn't the Olympics exploit a similar principle? A contestant's-eye view of the screen would make for great TV, and countless gaming addicts around the world would tune in.

## TENNIS

Tennis, like soccer, needs something to make the Olympics really stand out—in this case from the four Grand Slam tournaments.

So let's start by applying the same abbreviation principle. If full three- and five-set matches were replaced by contests consisting of three tie-breaks, that would enable spectators to see several super-fast, intense clashes in a single viewing session.

And why stop there? The ghost of Baron de Coubertin would be delighted if his successors banned players from grunting and shrieking while they serve. This unsporting practice distracts opponents, and spectators hate it.

**Let's ban tennis players from grunting and shrieking while they serve.**

Let's reform the serve, too: either by limiting players to one serve, with no first-fault, or by relocating the service line to a decent metre behind the baseline. That way there would be fewer points, but more long rallies: a double benefit for the fans.



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# And finally...

**How about giving** everyone the same equipment? It's a principle that would revolutionize cycling, shooting, rowing and sailing, to name but four Olympic sports.

In Beijing 2008, swimmers who wore the Speedo LZR suit, which cut their drag through the water, had a massive advantage over those who did not. The suit was banned from international competition, London 2012 included. The alternative could be considered: making state-of-the-art equipment available to all.

The principle is simple: the Olympics are supposed to be a test of athletes, not designers. They should be games in which the poor have a chance of competing alongside the rich. So let's see who wins when they fire the same guns, ride the same bikes, row or sail the same boats and, in the case of tennis, hit with the same rackets.

**Do you think you could change any of the sports at the Olympics to make them more watchable or be a better test of prowess? Is there a sport you would like to see introduced? Write to editor.india@rd.com**

## A CLOTHES FIT

**My parents, who recently** moved to Thailand, returned for a visit. Describing how clothing is sized very differently there, my very slim mother explained that in Thai sizes, she takes a large. "You're a large?" my father-in-law exclaimed incredulously, peering down at his rather substantial belly. "If you're a large, what would I be?"

"Naked!" replied my husband, without missing a beat. *Sarah Robins*



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# Truths about the Titanic

**The doomed liner, which sank 100 years ago, is the stuff of legend—and myths. Nigel Stafford-Clark, the producer of a new TV drama about the disaster, sinks a few favourites**

## THE CLASS THAT WAS FATED TO DIE

One of the most widely held myths about the sinking is that male passengers in third class were most likely to have been among the 1514 people who died on April 12, 1912. But the truth is probably a little more poignant. The research for our new *Titanic* mini-series certainly supports the widespread belief that many steerage travellers didn't make it to the lifeboats in time because they encountered locked gates. The gates were used by immigration officials to stop these travellers mingling with other passengers and spreading disease, and the ship's crew were slow to unlock some of them. But the highest mortality rate by far was among men in second class. Only eight percent survived—almost half the rate of males in steerage and a quarter of those in first class. Perhaps the most likely explanation is that the men in second class,

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desperately keen to be seen to "do the right thing," accepted unquestioningly the crew's initial orders to load the lifeboats with "women and children only," while the men from first class, with their greater sense of entitlement, swiftly translated it to "women and children first." Meanwhile, those in steerage fortunate enough to make it up to the deck just scrambled for any boat they could find.

***Titanic's*** **owner Bruce Ismay (right) with Captain Edward John Smith. Who was to blame for the liner's speed that night?**

## WHO'S FAULT WAS IT?

At the British inquiry into the sinking, led by judge Lord Mersey, several passengers blamed Bruce Ismay, chairman of the ship's owners White Star Line, for the *Titanic*'s excessive speed, which was found to be the primary reason for the liner hitting the iceberg. The press had already branded him a coward for choosing to escape from the sinking ship, and witnesses said he'd also been pushing its captain to claim the Blue Riband accolade for the fastest Atlantic crossing.

But they didn't offer Lord Mersey any proof to support these claims and, though the mud stuck to Ismay in the public consciousness, it should probably have been thrown at the supposedly put-upon captain, Edward John Smith.

Ismay knew that the Blue Riband was out of the *Titanic*'s reach. Her top speed was 23 knots and *Mauretania,* the smaller Cunard liner that had previously set the four days, ten hours and 51 minutes record, could manage 25. Indeed, Ismay's proud boast was that White Star was offering comfort and reliability rather than pace.

Still, Captain Smith allowed *Titanic*'s average speed to reach more than 21 knots just before the accident, despite the fact that he'd received three ice warnings. Reports indicate that, had it not sunk, the ship would have docked in New York up to half a day ahead of schedule, and it's likely that Smith was simply hoping for an impressively early arrival on its maiden voyage.

**April 12, 1912. The *Titanic* off Cork Head, Ireland, on her ill-fated voyage; (above) the tasty-looking second-class dinner menu.**

EMORY KRISTOF/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK (OPENING SPREAD); POPPERFOTO/GETTY IMAGES; (BRUCE ISMAY) DAVID HARTLEY/REX FEATURES

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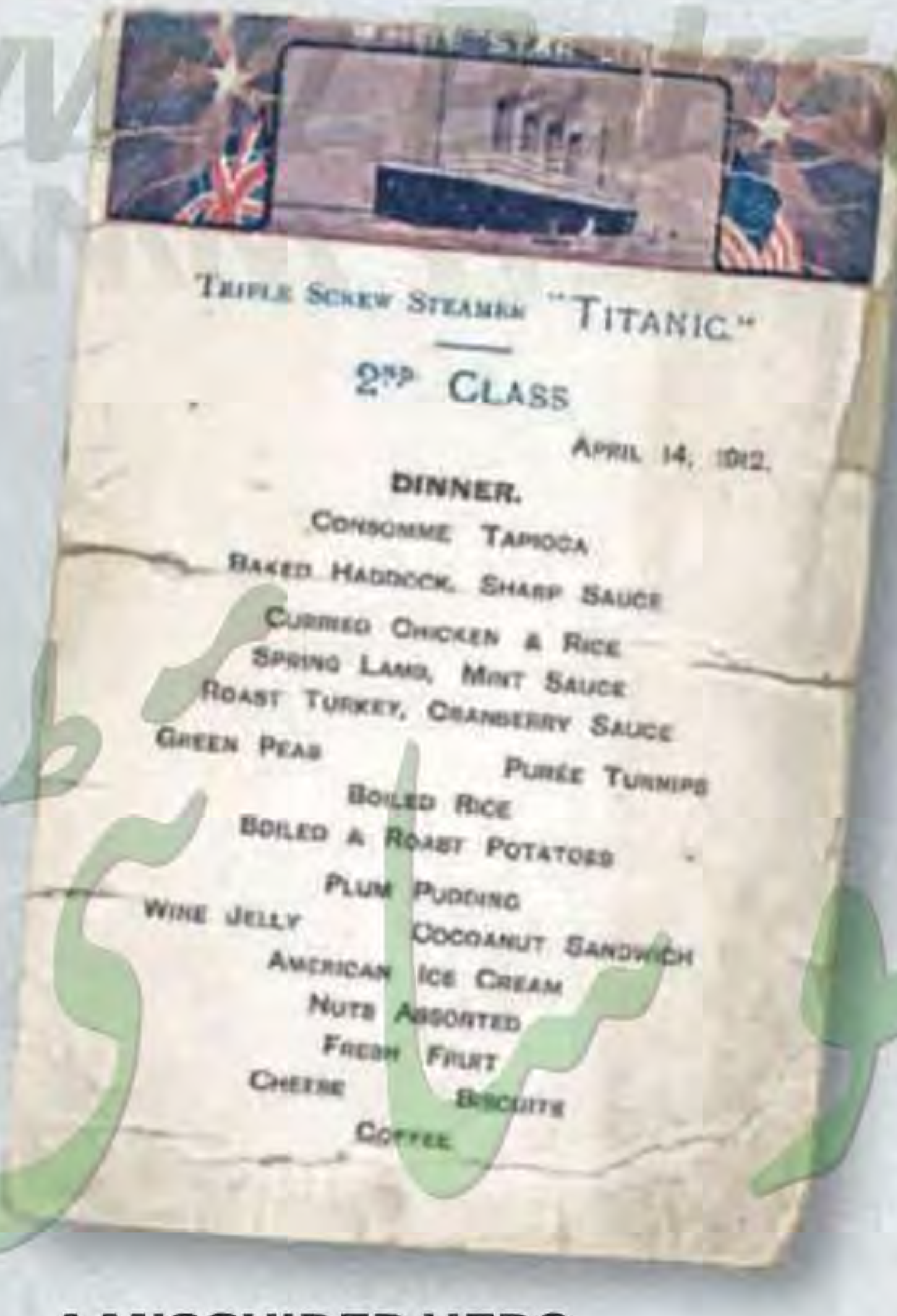
TRIPLE SCREW STEAMER "TITANIC"

2ND CLASS

APRIL 14, 1912.

DINNER.

CONSOMME TAPIOCA

BAKED HADDOCK, SHARP SAUCE

CURRIED CHICKEN & RICE

SPRING LAMB, MINT SAUCE

ROAST TURKEY, CRANBERRY SAUCE

GREEN PEAS PURÉE TURNIPS

BOILED RICE

BOILED & ROAST POTATOES

PLUM PUDDING

WINE JELLY COCOANUT SANDWICH

AMERICAN ICE CREAM

NUTS ASSORTED

FRESH FRUIT

CHEESE BISCUITS

COFFEE

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, LONDON

## A MISGUIDED HERO

Famously (or infamously), the *Titanic* had a disastrous lack of lifeboats—just 20, with a total capacity of less than 1200, on a boat carrying 2224 passengers and crew. Ironically, the situation was made worse by the officer most celebrated for making the best of a bad situation.

The courage and determination displayed by second officer Charles Lightoller in organizing the panicked passengers onto the evacuation craft was celebrated in the 1958 film *A Night to Remember*. Yet the brave seaman, portrayed by Kenneth More, may also have caused dozens of deaths.

In his own account, Lightoller said he was concerned about sending the lifeboats down full because they might have split under the strain, or some mishap could have occurred due to the passengers not being "boatwise." On the first point at least he was wrong, and was somehow unaware that the craft had shown in tests that they could withstand such weight. So he lowered them at only two-thirds capacity, and sent the bosun's mate and his men to open a gangway door so that the rest of the passengers could board at sea level. The crewmen were never seen again and, inevitably, several spare seats were left on many of the boats.

Though the lack of lifeboats seems like a scandal, it was perfectly legal. The maritime authorities saw them as no more than ferries that would ply back and forth between a stricken vessel and her rescuer—as had happened when the *SS Florida* struck and sank the White Star Line's *Republic* off Massachusetts in January 1909. Six people had died in the collision, but the rest of *Republic*'s 700 or so passengers and crew were transferred safely to the other ship. The problem for *Titanic*'s passengers was that a rescue boat, the *Carpathia*, didn't appear until around two hours after their liner had disappeared beneath the waves.

## SHAGGY-DOG TALE

There were around a dozen dogs on the *Titanic*, including Kitty, an Airedale belonging to American multimillionaire businessman John Jacob Astor. They were released from their cages at some point during the latter stages of the



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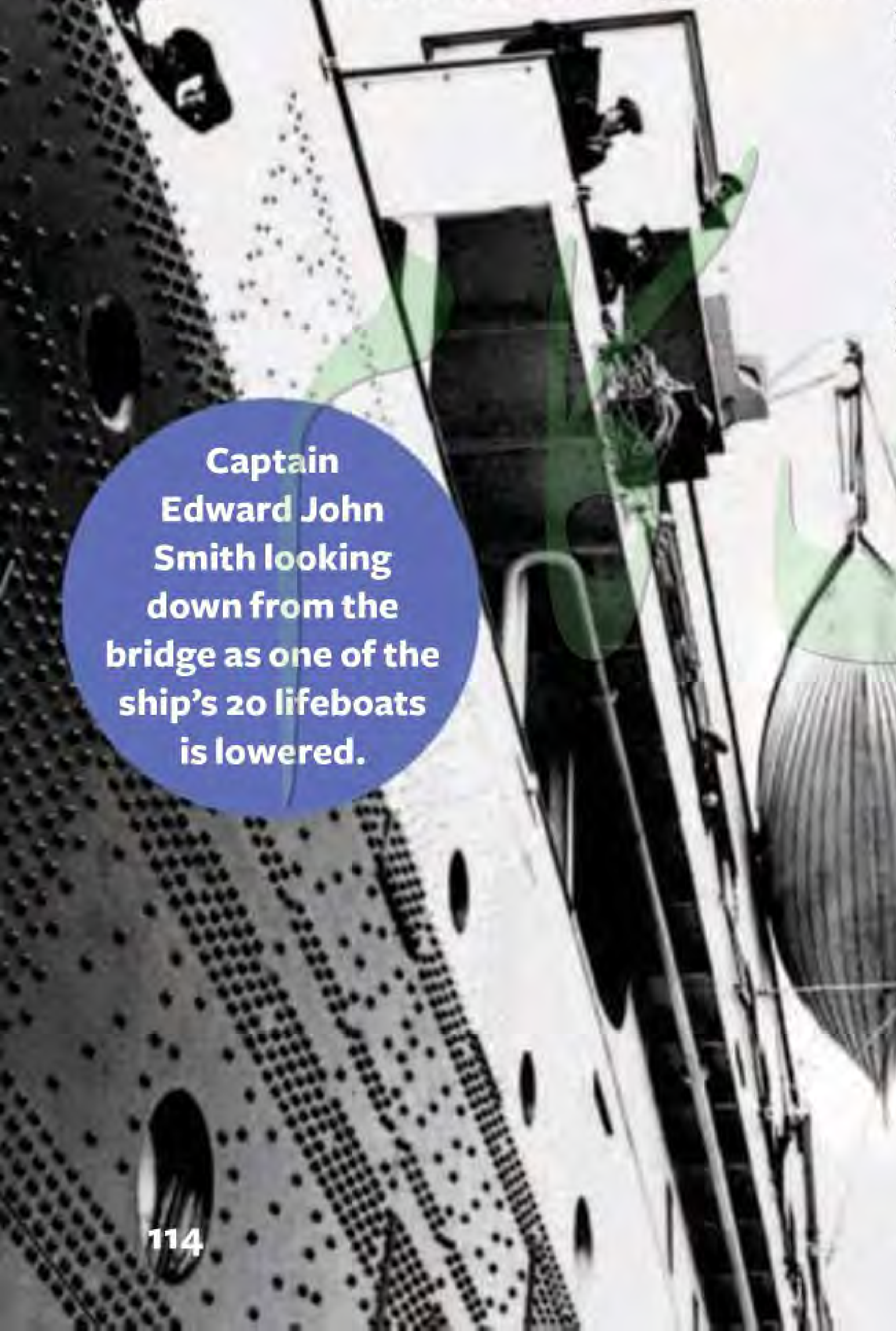
sinking—adding to the confusion on deck—and at least two are thought to have survived (though not Kitty).

But one of the strangest stories about the *Titanic*'s canine contingent concerns Rigel, a large Newfoundland that supposedly belonged to first officer William Murdoch.

According to a report first published in the *New York Herald* on April 21, 1912, the brave hound swam for more than three hours in the icy water and was responsible, through his sharp barking, for ensuring that one of the lifeboats was not run down by the *Carpathia*.

Unfortunately, it's a great tale without any basis in fact. There's no evidence that Murdoch even had a dog on board, and no sign in *Carpathia*'s crew list of Jonas Briggs, the seaman who supposedly talked to the *New York Herald*.



**Captain Edward John Smith looking down from the bridge as one of the ship's 20 lifeboats is lowered.**

## THE LAST WALTZ

*Titanic*'s legendary band, led by violinist Wallace Hartley, played on the ship's deck right up until the end, and received wisdom has it that their final tune was the very appropriate "Nearer, My God, to Thee." However, their actual musical choice was probably a little less elegiac.

The testimony of Harold Bride, one of the *Titanic*'s wireless operators, was that the last tune was something he called "Autumn," believed to be Archibald Joyce's jazzy "*Songe d'Automne*." It was part of the White Star Line's official repertoire, which contained dance numbers and contemporary hits—other survivors recalled hearing Irving Berlin's "Alexander's Ragtime Band"—and, whether Bride was right or not, it seems likely that Hartley and his colleagues would have resorted to something from this set list.

So the *Titanic*'s passengers probably met their end accompanied not by solemn religious music, but the charmingly inappropriate strains of pop.

## THE MOVIE MISTAKE THAT WASN'T

Some people thought they'd spotted a big mistake in James Cameron's 1997 film version of

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## SAILING THE *TITANIC*

When writing a drama about the world's most famous sunken ship, Julian Fellowes (pictured below) didn't have to deal with a fast-approaching iceberg. But he did have to deal with its cinematic equivalent. James Cameron's 1997 film (which has also released in 3D recently) loomed large, and the production house ITV's head of drama Laura Mackie admits to being "skeptical" about the chances of the new project being a success. But, with the show coming up for the centenary of the liner's sinking, she was clearly won over. So how did Julian manage it?

Sitting in a dressing room in the Budapest studio where *Titanic* was filmed, and resplendent in a blue blazer with gold buttons, a blue shirt and a spotted green tie, he explains all.

"The simple fact is that my *Titanic* is wholly different from James Cameron's. His was, in essence, a love story about the characters played by Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio. Mine features a variety of real-life people—from crew members to first-class passengers—and follows their stories through to what, in many cases, were their last few hours. We really get into their heads."

Among the travellers to have caught Julian's attention were Sir Cosmo Duff-Gordon (below), the Scottish land-owner who, until recently, had been wrongly accused of jumping the queue for the lifeboats.

"Letters written by his wife's secretary—who was with the couple during their rescue—show that he was actually quite brave," says Julian.

There's also the minor American actress Dorothy Gibson (pictured top right). She survived the sinking and, in the same year, wrote and starred in the limited-release film *Saved from the Titanic* about her experiences—wearing the dress she was rescued in.

"How theatrical is that?" laughs Julian.

*Tim Oglethorpe*

*Titanic*. When first officer Murdoch is alerted to the presence of the iceberg dead ahead, he calls out "Hard-a-starboard!", but the movie showed the helmsman turn the wheel (and the ship) to the left, not the right. In fact, Cameron was absolutely correct—and a similar scene is repeated in our drama.

Many big ships used to be steered with a tiller and, when you push one to the right (starboard), the craft moves to the left (port). Since the late 1800s, the new large steam ships had been steered by a wheel but, in 1912, Britain's merchant fleet still operated under "tiller orders"—partly to preserve tradition and partly for consistency when sailors were manning a variety of different craft. Amazingly, this system was still used up until 1933, and it's a miracle that liner collisions were not more common. ■

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# Laughter! :)
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**A** married couple has been out shopping for hours when the wife realizes that her husband has disappeared. So she calls his cellphone.

"Where are you!?" she yells.

"Darling," he says, "do you remember that jewellery shop, the one where you saw that diamond necklace you loved? But I didn't have enough money at the time, so I said, 'Baby, it'll be yours one day'?"

"Yes!" she shouts, excitedly.

"Well, I'm in the bar next to it." *Bonnie Townsend*

**A couple of** cockroaches are tucking in to the contents of a bin in a deserted alley. "Have you popped into that new coffee shop over the road yet?" asks one. "The floors are so shiny you can see your feelers in them. The walls are so clean you can't run up them. The air is so fresh it smells like flowers."

"Stop, stop!" cries the second cockroach in disgust. "Please, not while I'm eating!" *Shirleen Slabber*

**After a husband** and wife have a heated argument, the wife calls her mother. "He fought with me again! I'm coming over to live with you."

"No, no, darling," replied the mother. "He must pay for his mistake. *I'm* coming to live with you." *Joan Vercueil*

**I wear glasses because I like to dramatically remove them to display anger. It was awkward doing that with contact lenses.**
*Tim Seidell*

DUSAN PETRICIC

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**I just read a** great novel on my Kindle. It was a real button-presser.

*Peter Bacanin*

**Jack phoned** his wife Sanny at work. "Sorry love," said Sanny. "I'm up to my neck in work at the moment—I can't really talk."

"But I need to tell you something," said Jack. "I've got some good news and some bad news."

"OK, but I'm really short on time, so just say the good news."

"Well ... OK then. The airbag works."

*Grahame Jones*

**I finally have** a dental plan: I chew on the other side.

*Janine Ditullio*

**An Englishman,** a Frenchman, and an American are captured by cannibals. The cannibal chief says, "We're going to kill you, eat you, and use your skins to make a canoe. But you do get to choose how you die."

The Englishman pulls out a gun, yells, "God save the Queen," and shoots himself in the head.

The Frenchman grabs a bottle of cyanide, shouts, "Vive la France," drinks the poison, and dies.

It's now the American's turn. He pulls out a fork and, as he stabs himself all over his body, shouts, "Damn your stupid canoe!"

**Roxy, a large** black Labrador, was sitting up in his seat at the movies, wagging his tail, growling at the villain and barking excitedly at the hero's escapades. The woman in the seat behind him was intrigued.

"Excuse me," she said, tapping Roxy's owner on the shoulder, "that dog is extraordinary. I've never seen anything like it!"

"Yes, he's surprised me, too," said the owner. "He hated the book."

*Kent Belcher*

This brings back high school nightmares because, let's face it, spelling bedevils even the best of us.
Lane DeGregory/*Tampa Bay Times*

**Patient:** Doctor, I've had some strange symptoms lately and I'm hoping you'll be able to diagnose them.

Doctor: For starters, your eyesight seems to be poor.

Patient: Wait—how do you know? You haven't even examined me yet.

Doctor: You failed to see the sign outside. This is a veterinary hospital.

*Abid Ahmed*

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# INTELLIGENT DESIGN

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# DO WHALES HOLD THE SECRET TO CUTTING OUR ENERGY CONSUMPTION? CAN SHARKS REDUCE HOSPITAL INFECTIONS? A NEW FIELD OF RESEARCH DRAWS ON NATURE TO OVERCOME THE LIMITS OF HUMAN CREATIVITY

BY SHAUN PETT

**The Wright brothers didn't have** to look far for ideas when building their airplane: They studied birds. And Velcro was born when a Swiss engineer picked burrs off his clothing.

The act of copying nature to address a design problem isn't new, but over the last decade the practice has moved from obscure scientific journals into the mainstream. The term "biomimicry," popularized by American natural-sciences writer Janine Benyus in the late 1990s, refers to innovations that take their inspiration from flora and fauna. Biomimicry advocates argue that with 3.8 billion years of research and development, evolution has already solved many of the challenges humans now encounter.

"We often see nature as something you mine for resources, but biomimicry views nature as a mentor," says Carl Hastrich, an assistant professor at the Ontario College of Art and Design University in Toronto, Canada, one of the few schools that teach biomimicry.

From all around the globe, here are seven natural sources of inspiration for inventions that promise to transform every sector of society. >>

PHOTOS: VEER

***Opposite:*** **In 1941, George de Mestral was out hunting with his dog one day when he noticed sticky burrs—with their hundreds of tiny hooks—had attached themselves to his pants and his dog's fur. They were his inspiration for Velcro.**



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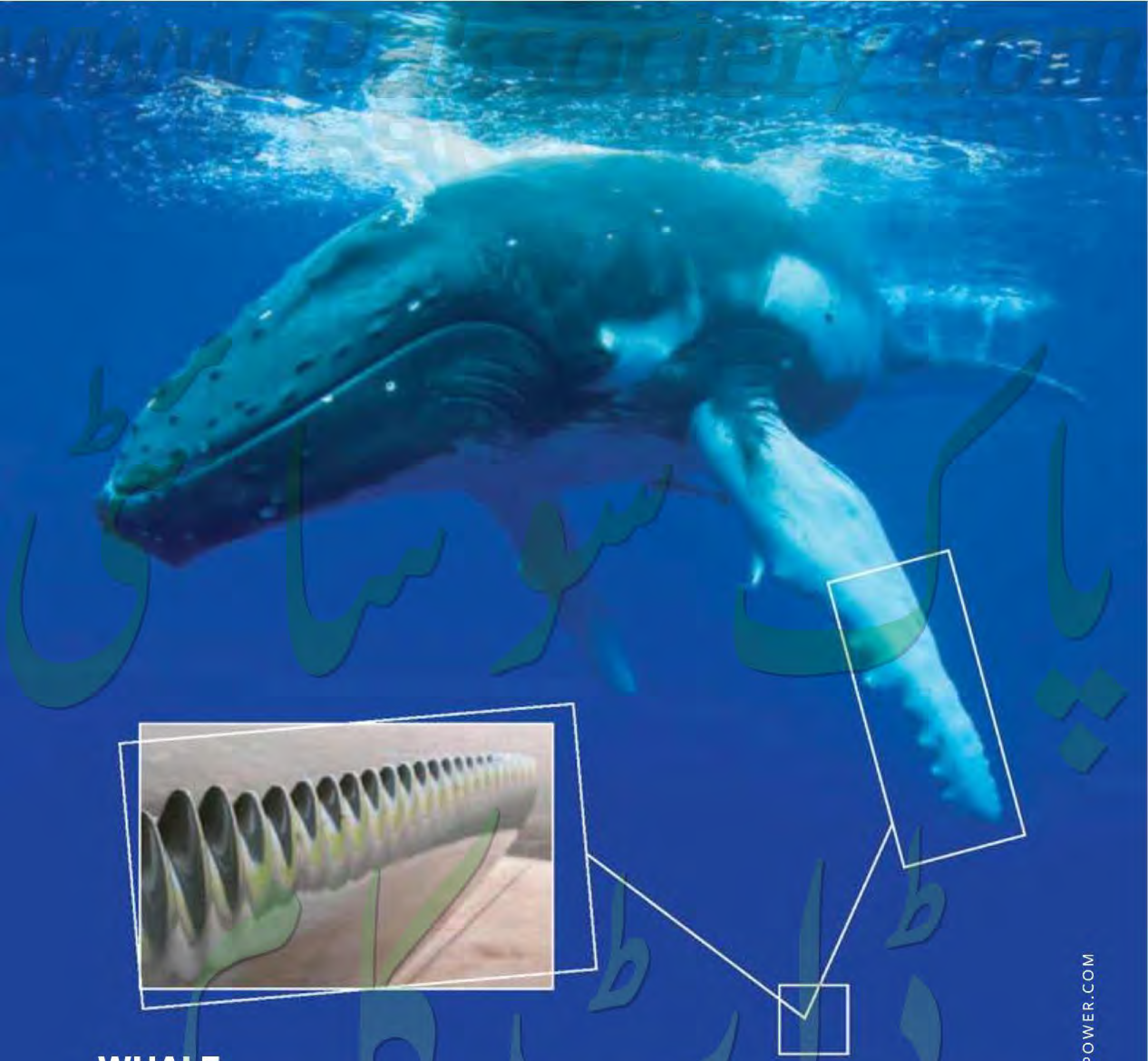

## WHALE

While browsing in a gift shop one day, US biologist Frank Fish came across a sculpture of a humpback whale. He was perplexed to find bumps on the "wrong" side—the front edge—of the flipper. If this sculpture is right, Fish thought, then one of the cardinal lessons of fluid mechanics is wrong: Until that point, a smooth leading edge was believed to reduce drag. But Fish discovered that the humpback's flipper bumps, known as "tubercles," improve lift and performance.

Today, WhalePower Corporation based in Ontario, Canada, develops and markets tubercle-enhanced fan blades that move 25 percent more air than conventional fan blades while using 20 percent less electricity. This is a huge gain, considering that fans are used worldwide in ventilation, air conditioning, computer servers and by wind farms.

(WHALE) ISTOCKPHOTO; (FAN BLADE) WHALEPOWER.COM



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(BIRD) VEER; (TRAIN) GETTY

## KINGFISHER

Japan's Shinkansen bullet trains zip passengers between the country's major cities at speeds up to 300 kilometres an hour. During test runs, engineers discovered that when one of the trains entered a narrow tunnel at high speed, atmospheric-pressure waves produced a deafening sonic boom that rattled windows 400 metres away. Hoping to solve this problem, engineer and avid birder Eiji Nakatsu asked himself if there was some living thing that manages sudden changes in air resistance as a part of daily life, and there was: the kingfisher. It dives from the air, which is a low-resistant medium, into water, a high-resistant one, with only a small splash. By redesigning the nose of the bullet train in the image of the kingfisher's beak, engineers reduced noise and cut electricity usage.

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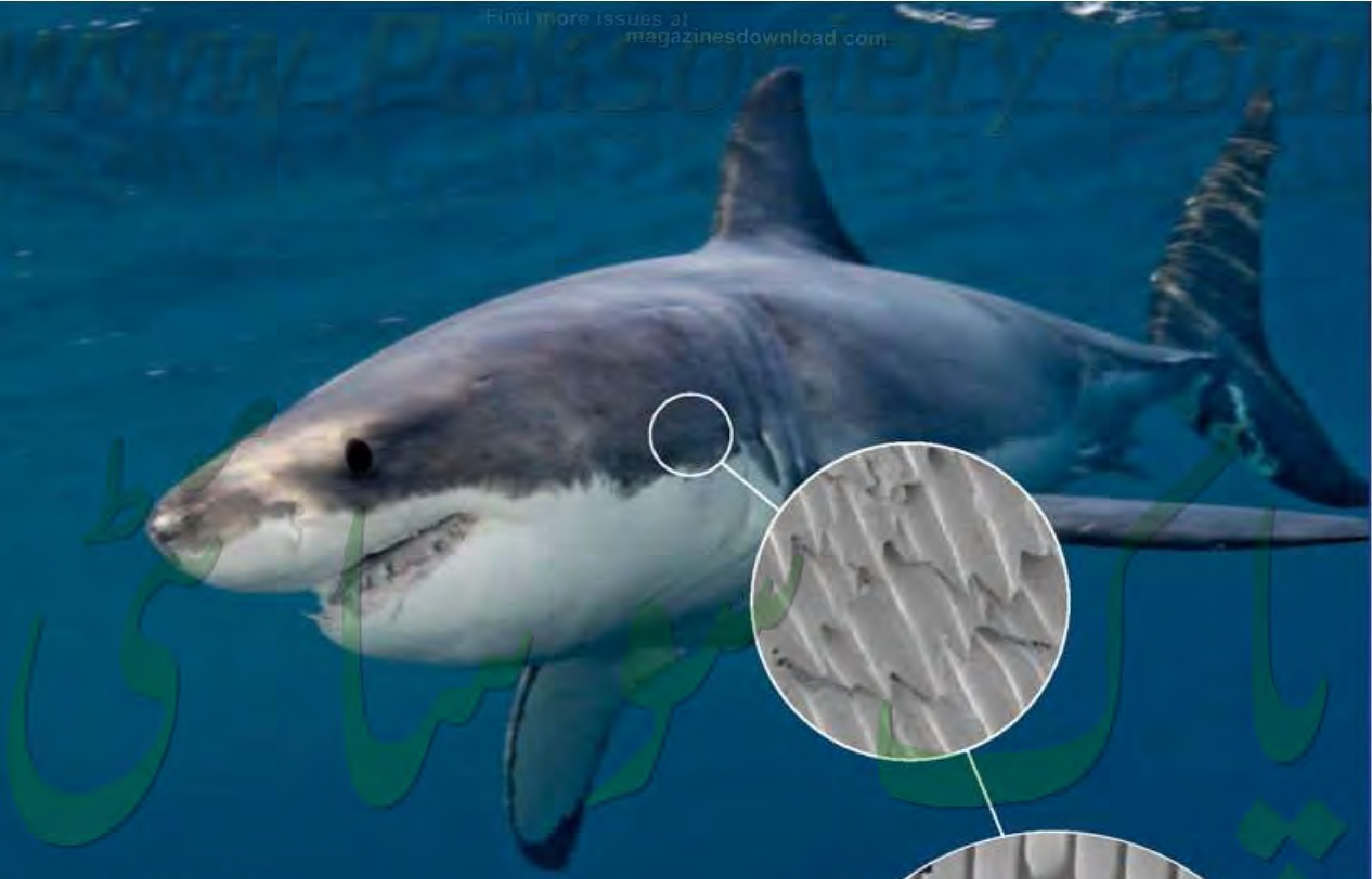

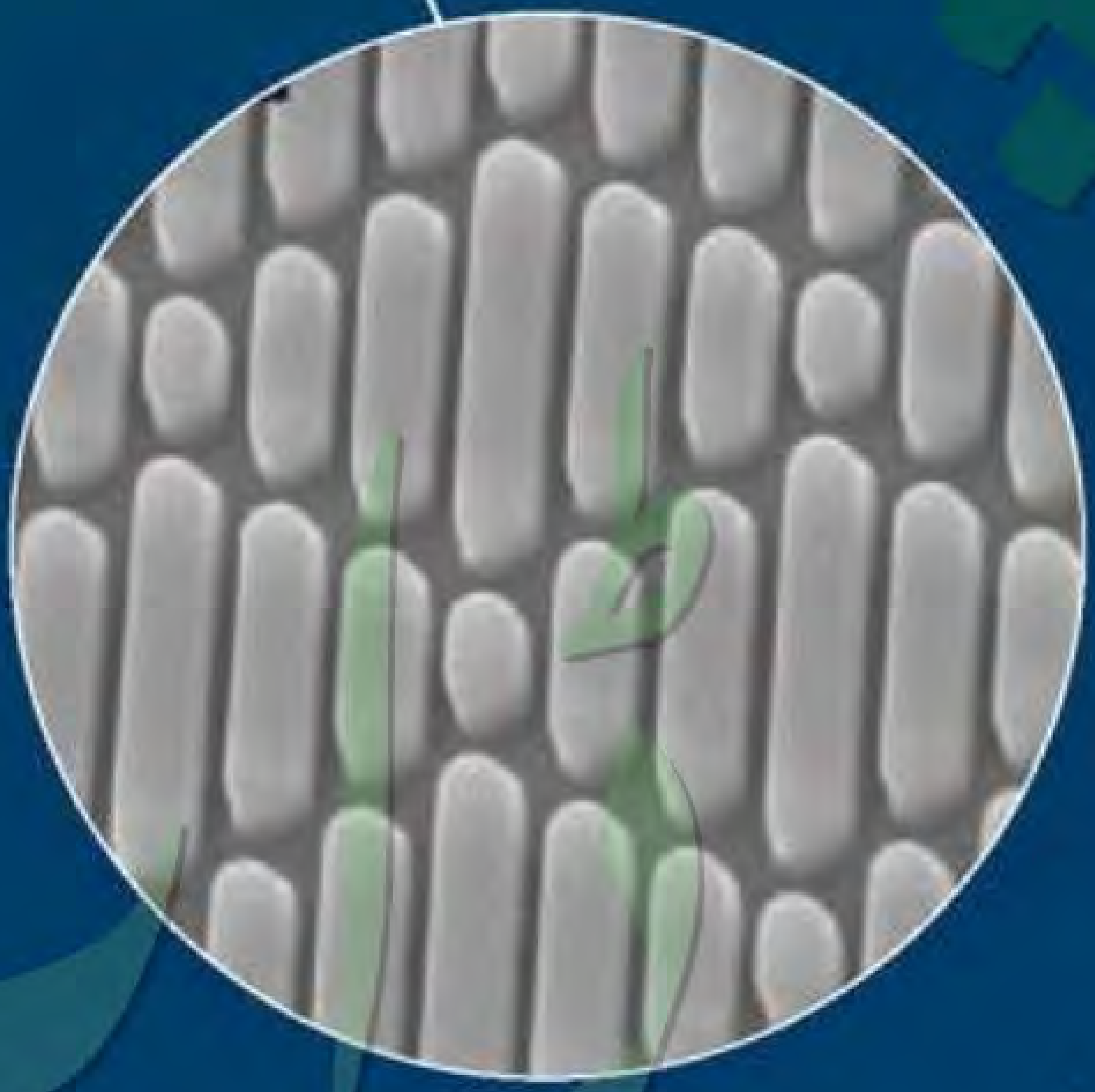

## SHARK

"Fouling"—the slimy growth that collects on ships' hulls—is a huge nuisance and is often remedied with potentially harmful copper-based paints. Tasked by the US Office of Naval Research to find safer antifouling methods, engineering professor Anthony Brennan learnt that sharks are one of the few marine animals that stay clean. The reason? The microscopic tooth-like pattern of their scales prevents algae and barnacles from taking hold. Brennan used this insight to create Sharklet, a pattern that reduces fouling by 85 percent, as compared with smooth surfaces. When Sharklet also proved able to discourage the spread of dangerous bacteria, its producers—aware that thousands of people die annually from hospital-acquired infections—developed the pattern into a wrap that can be applied to a hospital's high-risk areas, such as bed rails, bedside control panels and tray tables.

(SHARK) VEER; (INSETS) SHARKLET.COM

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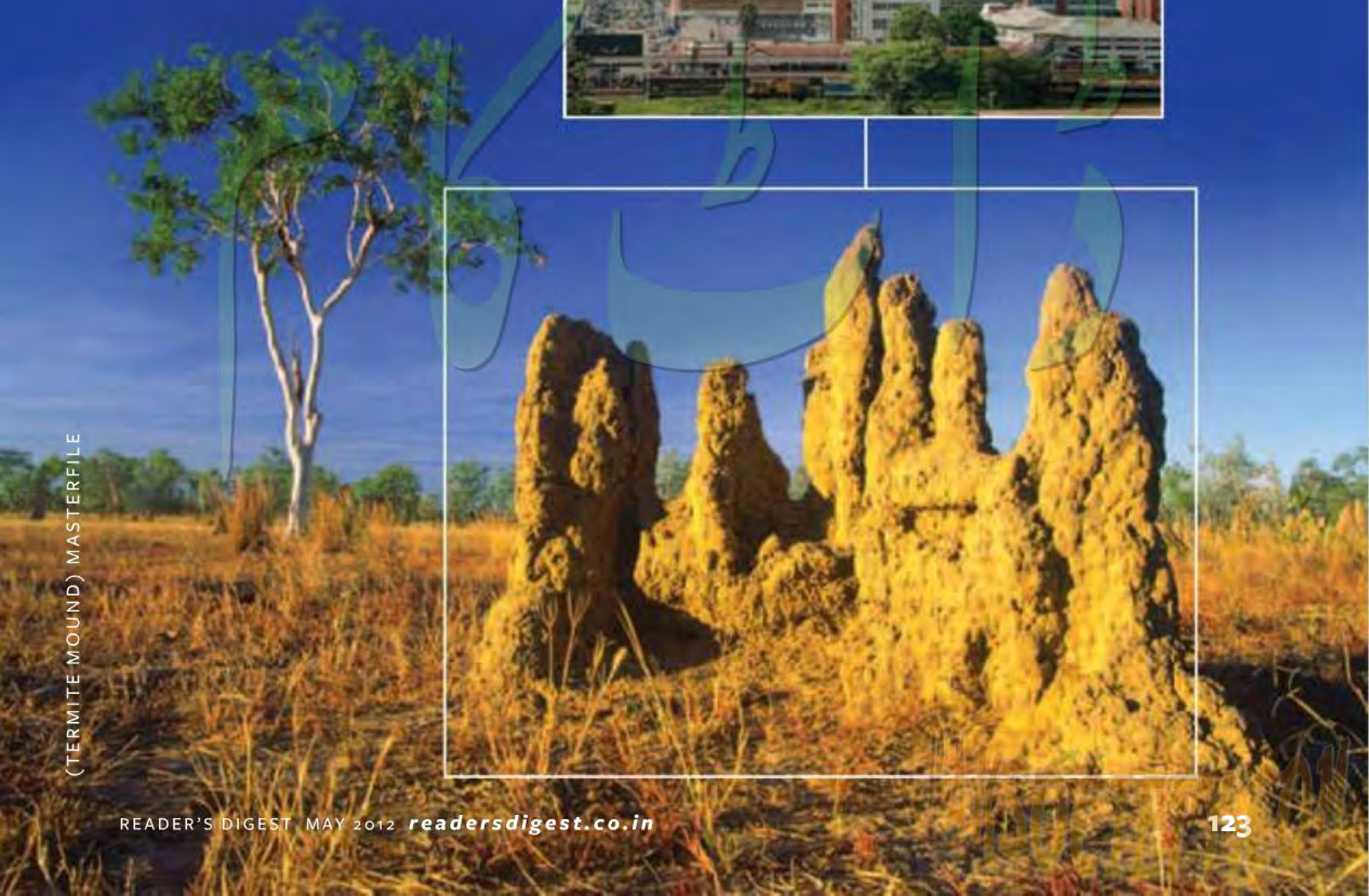
## TERMITE MOUND

Architect Mick Pearce was hired to design a building in his native city of Harare, Zimbabwe, that would remain cool without air conditioning, which is expensive to install and maintain. The idea of a termite mound, he says, "started as a rather light-hearted joke." But the joke stuck—for good reason: It was believed at the time that the insects cooled their mud homes using an ingenious system that catches breezes at the base of the mound. Pearce's design uses fans to suck fresh air from the building's atrium and blow it upward through hollow spaces under the floors, and then into offices through skirting vents. Electricity costs are one tenth that of a comparable air-conditioned building, and Pearce's structure uses 35 percent less energy than six regular Harare buildings combined.



(TERMITE MOUND) MASTERFILE

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MASTERFILE

## LOCUSTS

Neurobiologist Claire Rind at England's Newcastle University believes locusts have been given a bum rap. Rind has learnt that thanks to a highly evolved visual neural system, these crop-devourers are able to avoid crashing into one another when migrating in swarms of millions. Her discovery inspired automotive researchers at Volvo to develop pedestrian-collision-avoidance technology. "Locusts are quick to react and have reliable circuits," says Jonas Ekmark, preventive safety leader at Volvo Car Corporation. "They do their computations against lots of background chatter, much like driving around town." The ultimate goal? An accident-free car.

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PHOTOS: (BUTTERFLY) VEER; (DRESS) DONNA SGRO

## MORPHO BUTTERFLY

Found in the rainforests of Central and South America, the Morpho butterfly is famous for its iridescent blue wings. Grind up these wings, however, and you'll get a drab powder. The butterfly's hue is an optical illusion called "structural colour," the effect of a reflective surface interfering with light waves so that only certain colours reflect back. Research into the Morpho butterfly has resulted in revolutionary commercial applications: screens for computers, tablets and smartphones that use shifting microscopic plates, and clothing made of polyester and nylon fibres that can "mirror" a rainbow's range of tints without dyes.

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# Those Funny

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# So what if there's a euro crisis? Leg-pulling might just save them!

BY EDWARD LUCAS

# Europeans!

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MODERN TOSS

**Family jokes ought** to be a sign of affection and closeness. But in the European family of nations, public wisecracks are becoming increasingly rare.

One notable exception, the result of a commission to celebrate the Czech Republic's presidency of the European Union (EU), is the sculpture, Entropa, by shock artist David Cerný. He tore up a brief to focus on the member nations' strengths, preferring instead to portray each country provocatively.

The result was fury. For instance, Bulgaria was depicted as a Turkish style squatting lavatory. Germany was just as cross to find itself portrayed by a crossroads of autobahns—



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expressways—in which some saw a squashed version of a Nazi swastika. Romania, meanwhile, was a Dracula theme park.

The artist was unapologetic: he wanted, he explained, to highlight the disconnect between the polite, bland, politically correct manners of public life in Brussels, the EU capital, and the lively national stereotypes that survive in private thought and conversation. Cerný's dig at the UK's Euroskepticism was to leave the country out altogether.

Political humour used to be the most dangerous form of joke under Communism. Today, jokes are less risky, but also, less necessary. They were both a safety valve and a form of resistance.

Such jokes, though, still survive in the easternmost corners of Europe, often featuring the uneasy tandem of Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, and his nominal boss (but real-life sidekick) Dmitry Medvedev. Putin and Medvedev are ordering dinner in a restaurant. "I'll have a steak," says Putin. "And the vegetable?" asks the waiter. "He'll have steak too," says Putin.

Europeans of all stripes don't like their politicians much, especially in countries in the eastern half of the continent, where corruption and incompetence are pestilential. The same jokes about dim-witted, crooked policemen are common from the Baltic to the Black Sea (Q: A policeman is shaving himself. The telephone rings. Why does he cut himself? A: So he knows where to resume from).

Some jokes show a nice level of nuance, such as this gag about French and Romanian mayors who exchange stories about purloining EU funds: "See this bridge? 10% went to me," says the Frenchman. "See this bridge? 100% went to me," says the Romanian. "What bridge?" asks the puzzled Frenchman. "Precisely!" says the Romanian.

**Old jokes about** rich, vulgar and ignorant Americans have revived since the collapse of Communism, with the butts now being the new class of *nouveaux riches*, particularly the "new Russians," whose crudeness and extravagance are legendary. For example, "How much did you pay for that tie?" "$500." "What a pity, a shop over there sells it for $1000."

Mocking corruption and dishonesty swiftly shades into more treacherous territory, such as this Greek jibe about the Albanian recipe for omelettes: "First steal three eggs."

Here double standards abound. You can tell jokes about Germans; not only about the Nazi past, but also about their supposed arrogance and rudeness. "Do you know why Germans build such high-quality products? So they won't have to go around being nice while they fix them." It is, nonetheless, all but unthinkable to imagine a German telling a Jewish joke, unless he is a Jewish German.

One of the few German Jewish jokes that are so perfectly calibrated that they can be told without offence is this one. Berlin, 1935: Jewish scholar



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Rabbi Altmann's secretary asks him why he is reading *Der Stürmer*, a virulently anti-Semitic Nazi newspaper. "Are you some kind of masochist?" she asks. "On the contrary," he replies, "the Jewish papers are full of bad news: persecution here, assimilation in America. But in *Der Stürmer*, I read that we control all the banks, dominate the arts, and are on the verge of taking over the entire world. It makes me feel a whole lot better!"

The biggest shift is against telling jokes about ethnic groups who are supposedly stupid: Irish for the British; Poles if you are American; Belgians if you are French. Indeed, Poland's current foreign minister Radek Sikorski won kudos back in 1999 by forcing CNN to apologize after its founder, Ted Turner, told a silly joke implying that Polish soldiers used their feet to detect mines.

Oddly, jokes about the East Frisians of northwest Germany are still common and popular—not least because some in that flat and rainy corner of the country think the jokes promote their otherwise neglected region. Sometimes they get their own back. For example: "What do East Frisians do during a low tide? They sell plots of land to Austrians!"

Strangely, jokes about economic mismanagement and poverty are allowable, even though dim-wittedness and dishonesty (arguably, the cause of the credit crunch) are off limits. As in "What's the capital of Ireland? About five euros."

But the double standards widen as Europeans' eyes move east. It is no longer acceptable to poke fun at the Poles. But the fictional Kazakh journalist Borat, star of the eponymous satirical film, was regarded as hilarious, especially by people who couldn't find Kazakhstan on a map. Kazakhs did not see the joke.

Russian imperialism is good for a laugh, too. A Russian is filling in a form at the Estonian border. "Occupation?" asks an official helpfully. "No, it's just a business trip," comes the reply.

**The same jokes about dim-witted, crooked police are common from the Baltic to the Black Sea.**

The best guide to the stereotypes hidden beneath the surface is the jokes people tell about themselves. The Czech jokes featuring the schoolboy Pepicek reveal a sex-crazed, devious, cowardly and sharp-witted approach to life that insiders and outsiders alike might find quite close to reality.

In other private jokes, stereotypes remain too: Romanians are scheming, Hungarians gloomy and Finns overconfident. Famous Finnish last words: "We don't need an electrician."

With Estonia now alongside



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advanced Nordic countries—it joined the euro in January 2011—envious southern and eastern neighbours still lampoon the "hot Estonian guy" as stingy, dim and under-sexed, and find it highly amusing.

The most encouraging trend is self-deprecating humour. Just as rabbis tell the best Jewish jokes, Estonia has paved the way with savage jokes at its own expense.

In a recent TV commercial, two fearsome officers of the Soviet secret police burst into an idyllic Estonian farmhouse, brusquely telling the family that they have an hour to pack their things before deportation to Siberia, which was a traumatic real-life experience for tens of thousands during the Soviet era. The Estonians are so delighted that the trip will be free of charge—"a free holiday, a free holiday"—that they quite fail to grasp the true horror of what is happening, and ply their persecutors with food and drink.

**Estonia has paved the way in self-deprecating humour with savage jokes at its own expense.**

Such self-deprecating humour is the ultimate sign of emotional and political maturity, just as a rabid prickliness is typically a sign of unresolved complexes about superiority, inferiority and lack of attention from the outside world.

The sanction for those countries that don't produce enough self-critical jokes is a simple one: they will be ignored. That is an even worse punishment than being mocked.

An Estonian businessman I know was recently posted to the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, to sort out his company's troubled subsidiary there. He forced through radical management changes involving minute-taking, attendance at meetings and punctuality. In return, he sat through a week of backslapping anecdotes about Estonians' social, sexual and other shortcomings. Eventually his hosts tired of the fun and asked him for some Estonian jokes about Lithuanians. "We don't have any. Our jokes are about the Finns," he responded coolly.

What Europe, north and south, east and west, really doesn't have are some more jokes about the present day. Topics might include ignorance, complacency and ineffectiveness in Brussels.

It will be a real mark of success for the anonymous bureaucrats of the European Parliament and European Commission when the voters and tax-payers who put them there care enough about what they are doing to make fun of it.

Have you heard the one about European Council President, Herman van Rompuy? I haven't—yet. ■

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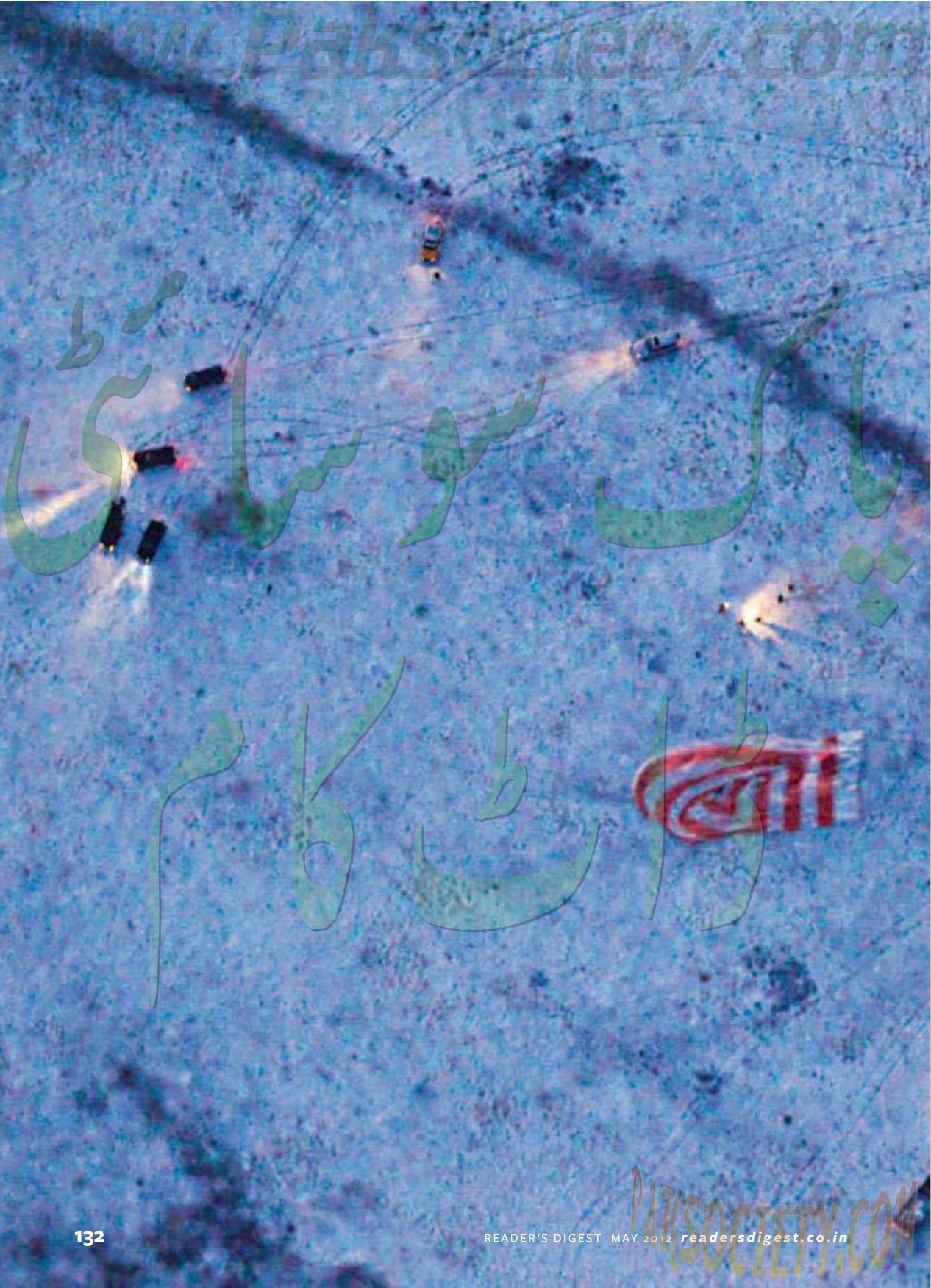

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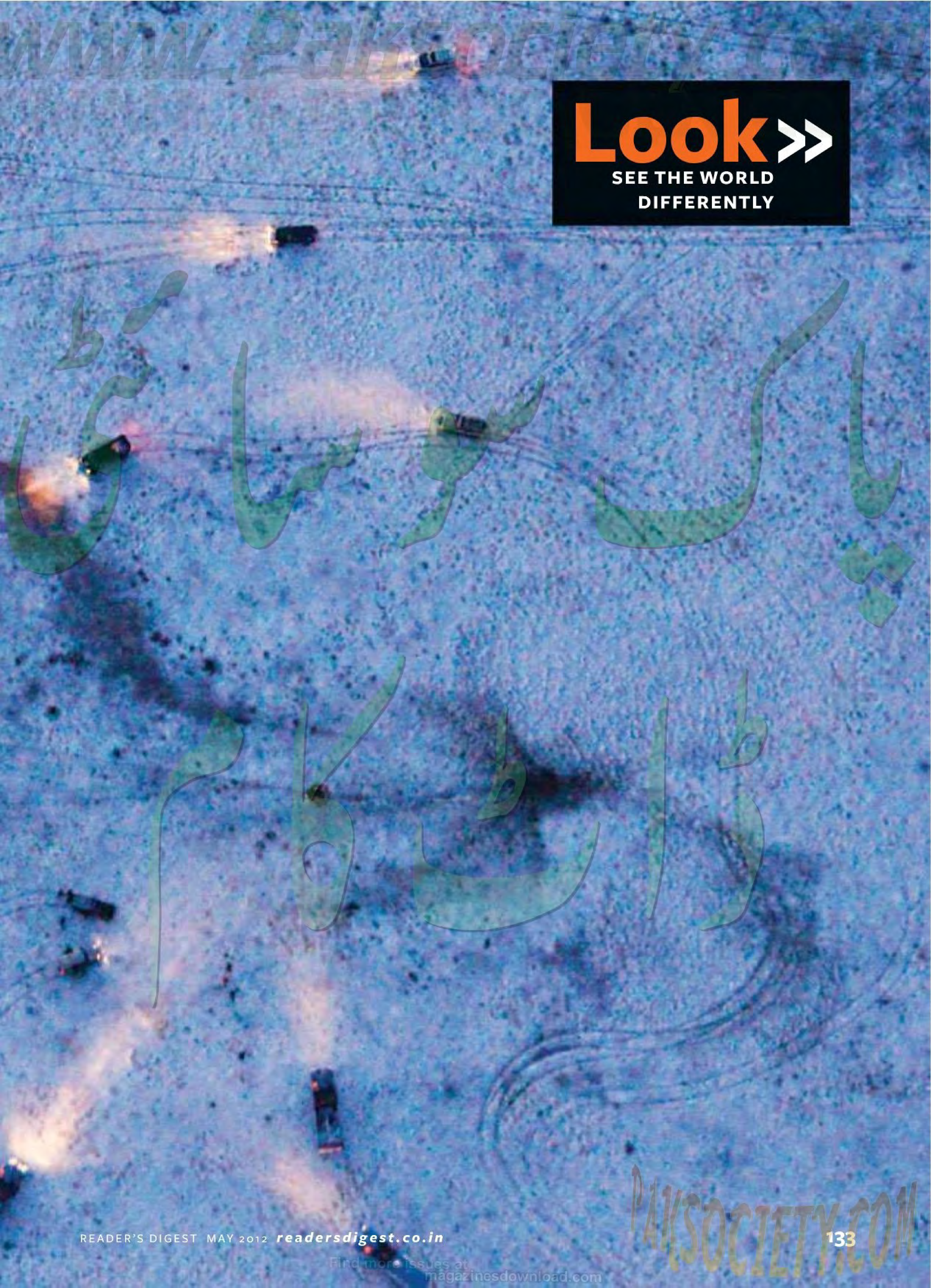

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# << Twice

Crew members aboard the *Soyuz TMA-02M* space capsule are all smiles after their safe landing near the town of Arkalyk in northern Kazakhstan, on 22nd November 2011. Here (*left to right*) are US astronaut Michael Fossum, Russian cosmonaut Sergey Volkov and Japanese astronaut Satoshi Furukawa, returning from five-and-a-half months aboard the *International Space Station* on a research mission in the station's huge weightlessness laboratory. Preceding pages: Moments before the landing, Russian space control centre vehicles converged on the spacecraft.

PHOTOS: © REUTERS/SHAMIL ZHUMATOV / © REUTERS/SERGEI REMEZOV

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# For six decades, this sanctuary for some of society's outcasts has restored joy and dignity to innumerable people

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BONUS READ

# Baba Amte's Forest of Bliss

BY ASHOK MAHADEVAN

DR SHEETAL AMTE

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**Gajanan Vasu dips** his forefinger in a small pool of milk and lifts it up in the air. The white blob clings to his fingertip; not a drop rolls down.

"See," Gajanan tells me proudly. "Hundred percent pure. We're not like other dairies that water down their milk. People trust us. Doctors even recommend that children be given only our milk."

As Gajanan talks briskly about how he has improved milk yields and sales by cross-breeding, feeding his animals high-protein fodder, and advertising on cable TV, he seems like any other manager boasting about his accomplishments. But this short man in his mid 50s radiating self-confidence is no typical executive.

Three decades ago, Gajanan was driven out of his village for contracting that most stigmatized and dreaded of diseases—leprosy. His own family shunned him.

"I thought then that I had only two choices—to commit suicide or go mad," Gajanan says.

Then someone told Gajanan to go to Anandwan, the community near Nagpur founded by Murlidhar Devidas "Baba" Amte. Here, Gajanan was welcomed, and given shelter, food and treatment. He was also quickly put to work—initially simple jobs like delivering letters, and then trained—by a leprosy patient like himself—to weave carpets. Within a couple of years his leprosy was arrested. But he decided to remain in Anandwan rather than risk an uncertain future in his village. A quick student, he learnt

**Gajanan Vasu does his chores.**
***Right:* A view of Anandwan.**

a variety of skills including stage lighting for the community's musical troupe. He fell in love with a young woman who'd come to Anandwan for the same reasons and married her. A few years ago, he was appointed the manager of Anandwan's then languishing dairy and quickly turned it around.

"At Anandwan, I regained my self-respect," Gajanan says. "It enabled me to become all that I could be."

During a recent visit to Anandwan, I came upon numerous such inspiring examples of resurrection. I'd gone there to find out what shape this famous institution was in, more than six decades after its founding in 1951. It was an interesting time to visit—the



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Amte family has always run Anandwan and now the third generation is taking over. How will Baba's grandchildren fare?

**Admittedly, they have** tough acts to follow, especially their grandfather's. Baba Amte, who died in February 2008 at the age of 93, was one of the most famous Indians of our time, venerated for living and working with leprosy patients and other outcasts of society.

He was also a fascinating man—handsome, strong, and with an enormous zest for life. As a college student in the mid 1930s, he paid little attention to his studies, dressed in pinstriped suits, hunted wild boar and other animals, wrestled, and raced around Nagpur in a sports car whose seats were upholstered in the skin of a leopard he had shot. Passionately fond of music, he once travelled 800 kilometres to Calcutta to attend an evening's concert by one of his favourite singers. Another great love was the cinema—he wrote film reviews and became a pen-friend of Greta Garbo and Norma Shearer, Hollywood's leading ladies of the day. Both stars sent him their photographs, and many years later he confessed he still felt sorry at having mislaid some treasured pictures of Garbo in a backless dress!

Baba became a criminal lawyer in 1936 and quickly built up a lucrative practice. He played bridge and tennis at his club. But he wasn't happy—he especially hated having to defend clients who he was sure were guilty. Restless, hungering for a more meaningful life, he visited Gandhiji at his ashram in Wardha and was attracted by the Mahatma's emphasis on simple living. Never a man to do things by halves, he became an ascetic, eating a bland meal once a day, walking barefoot, and letting his hair and

PHOTOS: DR SHEETAL AMTE

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**Baba first saw Sadhana when he went to her home for her elder sister's wedding. "I saw this beautiful, dimple-cheeked girl helping an old maidservant wash clothes," said Baba, who took an instant liking for her. They were married soon afterwards.**

MSS

beard grow. He visited ashrams in the Himalayas and had long conversations with sadhus—only to come to the conclusion that the other-worldly life was not for him. Returning to his hometown of Warora, he plunged into civic activity, and organized trade unions and co-operatives. During the Quit India movement of 1942, he was jailed for a couple of weeks, and after his release gave free legal advice to political prisoners.

Baba had taken a vow of celibacy in 1940, but six years later he fell in love with a beautiful woman twelve years younger than him. To the horror of her relatives, he wooed her ardently through letters, and overcoming all opposition, married her. By this time, he had given up his legal practice, renounced his inheritance, and was working with Dalits, encouraging them to stand up for their rights. Soon after their marriage, Baba and his wife started a small commune where poor people of different communities lived and did manual work together, cultivating land, making brooms and chappals, and pooling their income.

Although Baba's wife Sadhana came from a conservative family—her ancestors had been Sanskrit scholars for generations—and was personally a devout Hindu, she was just as unconventional as her husband. From the beginning of their marriage, she stood by Baba, no matter what he did. Years later, she would joke that had there been a feminist movement in her youth, she would not have been such a dutiful wife.

And now Baba's craziest project was about to begin.

One day, the members of the local scavengers' union—men who cleaned Warora's dry latrines—told Baba that they wanted to go on a strike. When he tried to dissuade them, they argued that he had no idea how miserable their working conditions were—and challenged him to do their job for just a day.



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One morning, Baba saw a shivering bundle of rags **BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD, AND SOON REALIZED IT WAS A MAN RAVAGED BY LEPROSY.**

Baba immediately took them on. Indeed, for the next nine months, he got up before dawn every morning, and for four hours cleaned latrines, climbing down into pits, shovelling excreta into a wicker basket and carrying it on his head to the place of disposal.

One morning, as he was returning home after completing his scavenging chores, Baba saw a shivering bundle of rags by the side of the road. As he came closer, he realized that it was a man ravaged by leprosy. He had two holes in place of a nose, and no fingers or toes. Maggots writhed in his numerous ulcers.

Panicking, Baba hurried away from the spot as fast as he could. Then, calming down, he returned and covered the man with an empty sack. But all that day, he was tormented. Why had he been so scared? Baba had always prided himself on his fearlessness. Indeed, after he had once single-handedly prevented some British soldiers from teasing a young Indian bride on a train—and been beaten up for his chivalry—Gandhiji had declared him an *Abhay Sadhak* [Fearless seeker].

Mortified, Baba resolved to conquer his fear. And the way to do it, he became convinced, was to devote himself to the care of leprosy patients.

By this time, Baba's commune had collapsed, and Sadhana and he were considering working among tribals in the jungles of central India. But here was the chance to do something even more radical. Since he knew nothing about leprosy, Baba first had to educate himself about the disease. He read as much as he could, and then took some basic training at a leprosarium near Wardha, before starting his own outdoor clinic next to the Warora government hospital. With nobody to help him—Sadhana was busy with their two small boys Vikas and Prakash—Baba single-handedly cleaned and bandaged the sores of leprosy patients, and gave them injections and medicines. And when Sadhana fell ill, he did the household chores too.

Baba soon realized that leprosy patients didn't just need physical care; they needed to be made psychologically whole again. And this could only be achieved by creating a community in which they could work and become productive members.

In 1949, Baba, along with 15 well-wishers, mostly lawyers and shopkeepers in Warora, founded the Maharogi Sewa Samiti (MSS), a charity to provide medical aid and rehabilitation to leprosy patients. Then, after a six-month course in leprosy at the Calcutta School of


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The Amte assets included ₹14 in the bank, **ONE LAME COW, FOUR SHOVELS, TWO HOES, TWO CROWBARS AND FIVE AXES.**

Tropical Medicine, he leased 20 hectares of government wasteland five kilometres from Warora to create the community of his dreams.

It was not a hospitable place—rocky, covered with scrub and trees, infested with scorpions and snakes. Panthers frequented the area. The nearest well was two kilometres away.

As helpers, Baba had six leprosy patients, Sadhana, and their two sons. Vikas, the elder boy, was then just four. Their assets consisted of ₹14 in the bank, one lame cow, four shovels, two hoes, three pick-axes, two crowbars and five axes.

After weeks of back-breaking digging and shovelling, they finally struck water. It was May, the hottest month, and the temperature was well over 40 degrees C. Baba and the others worshipped the water with wild flowers and milk and gazed for hours at their first success. The following month, Vinoba Bhave, Gandhiji's spiritual heir, came to visit, and declared that one day their story would be a Ramayana of social service.

Prophetic words indeed! Gradually, the community, now named Anandwan, grew. By 1954, it had around 60 leprosy patients and six wells. All 20 hectares of scrub had been cleared. That year, a group of young foreign and Indian volunteers laboured alongside leprosy patients to construct three single-storied permanent buildings. And in 1957, Baba started his second leprosy project 90 kilometres away.

Over the years, the MSS's five centres in eastern Maharashtra have helped 2.3 million disadvantaged people. Of these more than a million have been people without leprosy—the MSS also provides free general medical services to poor people, teaches farmers with tiny plots to improve yields, educates blind and deaf children and trains physically challenged youngsters in 40 vocations.

Government grants account for only a small percentage of the MSS's income. Forty percent of the Samiti's earnings is self-generated, mostly from the sale of its own products, which range from milk, wheat and rice to greeting cards, carpets and cloth.

Anandwan remains the hub of the MSS. Around 2000 people live in this spotless, attractive, largely self-sufficient community, now spread over 190 hectares, with farms, orchards, a bird sanctuary, small-scale industrial units, vocational training centres, two colleges, three hospitals, a dairy, biogas plants and three schools.

**Vikas Amte asks** the three dozen visitors who've just arrived in



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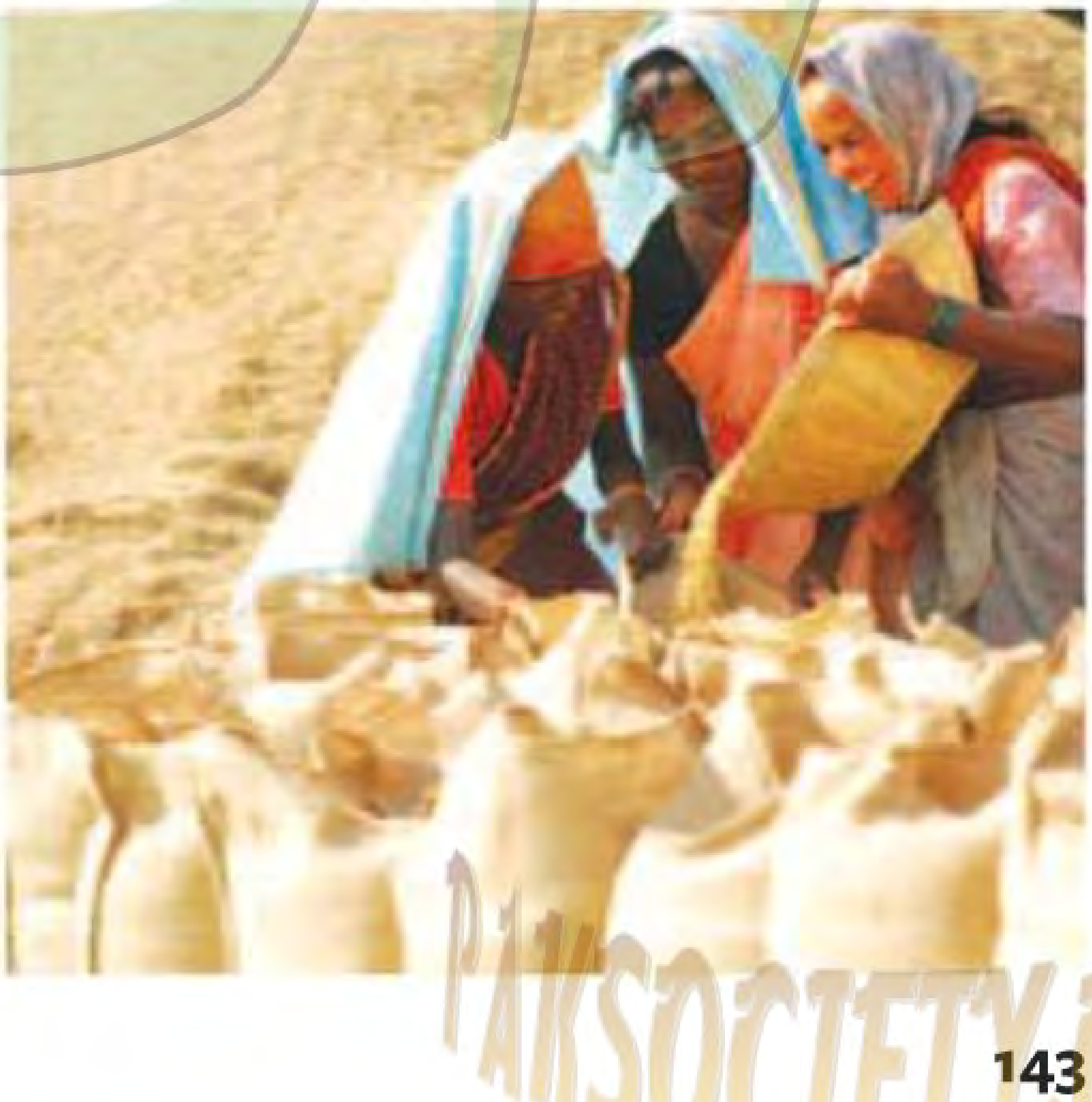
**Today, the model community of Anandwan, spread over 190 hectares and ably led by Vikas Amte, has farms, small-scale industrial units and lakes filled with fish. Everybody is gainfully employed.**



PHOTOS: DR SHEETAL AMTE

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DR SHEETAL AMTE

Prakash and Vikas Amte grew up in Anandwan. Even as children they were encouraged to help out—among their first jobs was washing utensils.

Anandwan to introduce themselves. They include housewives, teachers, students, businessmen, scientists, and bureaucrats. Mainly middle-class Maharashtrians from Pune and Mumbai, they are among the one lakh people who come here every year, drawn by the legend of Vikas's father.

Unlike Baba, who always wore just a khadi singlet and shorts, Vikas is nattily dressed in a crisply ironed cream kurta-pyjama manufactured at Anandwan by leprosy patients. But as he talks, rapidly jumping from one subject to another, I wonder whether his listeners realize what a remarkable man he is. Having always been in Baba's giant shadow, Vikas is little known to the outside world. But he is, in fact, the architect of modern Anandwan.

Vikas and his brother Prakash, of course, grew up here. Even as children, they were encouraged to help out—among their first jobs was washing the community's cooking utensils. They did it with gusto, invariably smearing each other's faces with the ash used for cleaning when they'd finished.

The boys, naturally, had few possessions. Indeed, the first time they entered a large shop they went wild, opening everything and insisting on buying all that was on display, including buckets and glass tumblers.

Despite hardships, Anandwan was a wonderful place to grow up in,



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Aware that he didn't have his father's charisma, **VIKAS ADOPTED A DIFFERENT MANAGEMENT STYLE. HE DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY.**

and both boys loved the closeness between residents, the community's strong sense of values. And because it had no full-time doctors—most physicians were afraid to work with leprosy patients—Vikas and Prakash determined very early on that they could best contribute to the community by studying medicine.

During Inter-Science, though, Vikas began considering an engineering degree. But since the Amtes could not afford the expense of the boys studying at different colleges, it was decided that he should stick to his earlier plan. So they both went to Nagpur Medical College, dressed at first, to the amusement of their classmates, in identical khadi trousers and shirts.

Although they lived in Nagpur and Wardha for seven years, city life never attracted them. And, totally focused on their studies, they made few friends. After graduating, Vikas returned to Anandwan whereas Prakash decided to work at a new MSS medical project in the village of Hemalkasa, 250 kilometres away.

Vikas had specialized in leprology before returning to Anandwan in 1971 to take charge of its hospital. But being a man with a huge range of interests—"Jack of all trades and master of some" is his motto—he quickly became involved in numerous non-medical activities too. Among other things, he started new small scale industries and reinvigorated old ones, solved Anandwan's perennial water problem by creating a complex of tanks and lakes, beautified the campus with flowers and trees, and designed tools that people without fingers could use.

Aware that he didn't have his father's charisma, Vikas adopted a different management style. He was down to earth. He delegated responsibility. He consulted people. Unlike Baba, he was not a strict disciplinarian. And although Baba formally remained the head of the MSS until his death in 2008, it was Vikas who ran Anandwan from the 1970s—and he made it hum.

**Standing next to me,** Prakash Amte stretches a long hooked rod to the bottom of the deep pit and lifts up a black-and-yellow striped snake. "Banded krait," he says, as I move back hastily. "It's more poisonous than a cobra."

As I eye the creature warily, Prakash talks matter-of-factly about being bitten by a Russell's viper a few years ago. "Entirely my fault," he says. "I was showing some visitors its teeth and I probably opened its jaw a little too wide." Although he immediately took


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Forty years ago, Prakash and his bride Mandakini established their medical project **IN HEMALKASA, WHICH WAS EVEN MORE REMOTE THAN ANANDWAN.**

the antivenin, Prakash's body soon ballooned with fluid and he gained 15 kilos. He was rushed to an ICU in Nagpur. Miraculously, he survived.

These days, Prakash, who quit active doctoring a couple of years ago, spends his time showing visitors the snakes and other animals in his private zoo in Hemalkasa and playing with his three grandsons. More austere than his brother Vikas—like Baba, he wears only singlet and shorts—he, too, has earned his rest.

Forty years ago, when Prakash and his bride Mandakini*, also a doctor, established their medical project here, Hemalkasa was even more remote than Anandwan had been in 1951. Deep in the jungle, it was home to the Madia Gonds, an impoverished tribe who survived by practising shifting agriculture and eating whatever they could, rats and lizards not excluded. There wasn't much leprosy in the area; indeed, the Madia Gonds felt no revulsion for the disease and patients without fingers were fed by their families. But cerebral malaria, tuberculosis, cholera and pneumonia were major killers; other scourges included snake bite and bear attacks.

Since the Madia Gond language is not related to either Marathi or Hindi, Prakash, Manda, and the half-dozen idealistic young middle-class men who joined them couldn't even communicate with the local people at first. Nor were the Madia Gonds welcoming. Always exploited by outsiders like merchants and forest officials, they were suspicious of the newcomers.

Then an epileptic Madia Gond boy with extensive burns who'd earlier been unsuccessfully treated by a *mantrik* was brought to the centre. The burns were infected with worms and the boy was close to death.

Prakash cleaned the burns and gave the boy antibiotics and anti-epilepsy medication. Luckily, he survived. Soon after, Prakash cured some people with severe diarrhea. Word about the project finally began to

* Vikas's wife, Bharati, is also a doctor. She runs one of Anandwan's hospitals. Also see "True Believer," our interview with Baba Amte in Reader's Digest September 2005.

**CHALLENGE ANSWERS**
SEE PAGE 159

**Where are you @?**
C is the missing figure as each row has two matching shapes in different positions and colours.

**Number in the hole**
X=37.
A (10+11+18+19)÷2=29
B (12+13+20+21)÷2=33
C (14+15+22+23)÷2=37
D (16+17+24+25)÷2=41


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Three generations of Amtes. *Above*: Dr Vikas Amte (in grey shirt) and his family. *Below*: Dr Prakash Amte (at centre) with his family.

PHOTOS: MSS



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DR SHEETAL AMTE

**Sadhanatai with Baba in more recent times. After being bedridden, he was wheeled around Anandwan every evening in his *"Baba-gadi"* so he could still be in charge and see that things were running smoothly.**

spread after a man who was brought in unconscious with either cerebral malaria or meningitis—without diagnostic kits, the Amtes couldn't be sure—walked back home after treatment carrying his stretcher.

The tribals weren't the only people in Hemalkasa who fell sick. During their first year, every member of the project came down with malaria. Prakash also developed ulcers and acidity, the latter triggered by stress.

But as the first residents of Anandwan had done more than 20 years earlier, they gamely soldiered on.

One day, after Prakash ran into a Madia Gond hunting party the project began taking care of another kind of patient. The Gonds had killed a pair of monkeys, and their baby, still alive, was clinging to its mother's breast.

Prakash, who'd always loved animals, managed to acquire the baby by promising to give the Gonds some grain in exchange. He took it home, and by bottle-feeding it milk for the next few days, saved its life, and decided to raise it. Gradually, the Madia Gonds started bringing him other orphaned animals—leopards, porcupines, deer, hyenas, and bears.

Initially, these animals were allowed free run of the Amte house, where they co-existed happily—one early photograph shows a Pomeranian suckling its two pups, a leopard cub, a fawn and a baby squirrel, all at the



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The third generation of Amtes is as dedicated to the MSS as the second. **THE TUG OF THEIR REMOTE HOMES IS VERY STRONG, THEY CAN'T LIVE ANYWHERE ELSE.**

same time. Later, they were moved to their own cages, and today the "Amtes Animal Ark" is what most visitors to Hemalkasa head for first.

There is, of course, a lot more to see: A 50-bed hospital, complete with an operation theatre, that treats over 40,000 patients each year, a well-equipped dental clinic, a diagnostic laboratory, and a boarding school for 650 tribal children. Like Anandwan before it, Hemalkasa has been transformed beyond recognition.

**This then is** the legacy that Prakash's sons Digant and Aniket, and Vikas's two children, Kaustubh and Sheetal, have to live up to. Fortunately, all four are determined to do so—and have spouses that not only support them but are themselves involved in the organization.

The third generation of Amtes is as dedicated to the MSS as the second. The tug of Anandwan and Hemalkasa is very strong, and they all confess that they can't possibly live anywhere else. Not that they are clones of each other. Digant and Kaustubh are the strong, silent types, whereas Aniket and Sheetal are talkative and outgoing. All are well-educated professionals. Digant is a doctor, Kaustubh a chartered accountant and Aniket an engineer. Sheetal first finished medicine, then studied social enterprise management. Like her father, she enjoys doing different things.

The problems the young Amtes face today are, of course, not physically challenging. Even Hemalkasa, once so remote that it would be cut off for months during the monsoon, can now be easily reached by road. It has broadband and satellite TV.

At Anandwan, the main problem is financial. More and more residents are becoming too old to work. This, along with high inflation and insufficient government grants, has resulted in costs exceeding income, and the MSS has launched a fundraising drive.

Last August Sheetal and Kaustubh also began lobbying the government to increase its pitiful 20-year-old allowance for the care of leprosy patients. After some intensive research, Sheetal was able to show that whereas the cost of a person's meals for one day as recommended by the National Institute of Nutrition was ₹52, the government's allowance for food was only ₹7.50!

Kaustubh and Sheetal presented the President, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, and other key politi-



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cians and bureaucrats with such facts. Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan was so shocked that he personally donated ₹10,000 to Anandwan, and on March 21 this year, the government announced a four-fold hike in the allowance.

Some novel cost-cutting measures are also being contemplated. Because eggs and fish are relatively cheap but very good sources of protein, Sheetal wants to introduce them in the community's diet—something unthinkable if her conservative grandmother had been alive.

Hemalkasa's problems are very different from Anandwan's. In 2008, Prakash and Mandakini won the Ramon Magsaysay Award—Baba had won it 23 years earlier—and the resulting publicity has helped keep the donations coming.

Hemalkasa, however, is caught in the middle of the violent conflict between government forces and the Naxalites in central India. The police have raided the campus looking for Naxalites, and the insurgents have killed suspected police informers in the hospital. It is dangerous to alienate either side, so the Amtes have to continually perform a nerve-racking balancing act.

**Shravan Govinda Kaduskar** shuffles gingerly forward, a steel bucket balanced in the palm of his fingerless hand. Shravan, now in his 80s, came to Anandwan when he contracted leprosy 55 years ago. He laboured alongside Baba to build Anandwan, then managed a vegetable garden. Now too old to work, he lives with around 400 other elderly inmates in Sneh-Sawli, Anandwan's overcrowded old-age home.

Shravan, who's now blind, is about to perform one of his daily chores. Reaching Sneh-Sawli's dhobi ghat, he feels around for the water tank. Half-filling his bucket, he soaks and soaps some clothes, then starts thwacking them against a white-tiled slab. After another soak, he wraps the clothes around both his arms and squeezes the water out.

Shravan is washing not just his own clothes, but those of two other Sneh-Sawli residents even frailer than him. As I watch him, marvelling at his independence and grit, Sheetal comes up to me. "That's Baba's spirit," she says. "We will never let it down."

*To learn more about the projects, donate, or to help Anandwan in any other way, phone (07176) 282034 or 9822465834/9922550006. E-mail: vikasamte@anandwan.in The website is: www.anandwan.in*

**I was watching a film** set in the wetlands of Florida state with my 14-year-old son Robert. I decided to test his geography by asking what state they were in. "They're wet and boggy," he replied. *Jackie Sutton*



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# Factor in Your Sunscreen

## Wise up to the SPF one-upmanship!

Choosing a sunscreen used to be simple. The spray, gel or lotion with the highest SPF (sun protection factor) gave you the most protection, right? Certainly, if used correctly, it would protect against UVB rays—that part of sunlight responsible for burning.

But now scientists know that UVA rays—which don't turn the skin red and aren't blocked by all sunscreens—penetrate the skin more deeply, can indirectly damage DNA and lead to skin cancers including deadly melanoma. UVA rays are the principal cause of premature wrinkles and loss of skin tone and elasticity. The good news is that sunscreens labelled "broad spectrum" which block both UVA and UVB light are available.

ISTOCKPHOTO

### Much confusion

Recently, one of my friends asked



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me to bring back a sunscreen with an SPF of 85+ when I visited the US because she had read about it in an imported magazine. Was this US product better than anything we can get here? No, actually, but it's easy to get confused.

Studies show that when applied correctly the difference in protection between an SPF of 30 and an SPF of 85 is marginal. SPF30 reflects 97% of UVB rays; SPF50 blocks 98% and SPF100 blocks 99%. Even that stalwart of the category—SPF15—shields against 93%.

When you look at the hard facts, it's easy to understand why even the US Food and Drug Administration is now debating whether to cap SPF numbers at 50, because triple-digit figures and SPF one-upmanship gives consumers a false sense of security.

It's also likely that higher SPFs give people a distorted sense of protection. Experts are concerned that people using sunscreens labelled with an SPF of 50 or more do not reapply them as often as they should (every two hours—or more often if swimming).

And very few people apply the amount of sunscreen that makers use when testing the SPF: 2mg per square cm. That's an amount the size of a golf ball for full body coverage.

## Beauty boosters

SPF ratings in moisturizers, foundations, lipsticks and other cosmetics have been a major selling point for over 20 years. One in ten new skincare launches now incorporate a sunscreen. Remember, though, that in make-up and skincare it's only for added protection. Applying SPF20 moisturizer over SPF30 sunscreen does not add up to an SPF of 50. And foundations and moisturizers should never be your sole means of sun protection because they are not reapplied at regular intervals. *Elisabeth King*

### AND THE FUTURE?

With no such thing yet as a completely waterproof sunscreen, so much research is being undertaken to formulate sunscreens that are super-resistant to water and sweat. We will also be seeing more sunscreens with reflective pigments and inorganic spheres to deflect light away from the skin's surface. With fear of aging, rather than sunburn, becoming the main driver of sunscreen sales, the continued development of sunscreens that offer greater protection against UVA rays has become the holy grail of research.


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# News From the World of Medicine

GERMANY

## Lyme Disease Gel

Every year, doctors diagnose innumerable new cases of Lyme disease, which a person contracts after being bitten by an infected deer tick. German and Swiss researchers have developed an alternative to the antibiotic pills doctors normally prescribe for those who think they've been bitten: an antibiotic gel that can prevent Lyme disease if it's applied to the skin within a few days of a bite. In early tests, the gel protected mice from the disease even five days after the tick bite. The medicine is currently being tested in Germany and Austria.

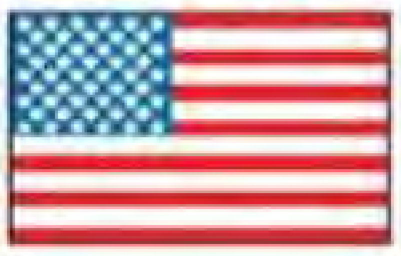
NETHERLANDS

## Tumours That Glow

Researchers from the Netherlands, Germany, and the United States have developed a method that uses a fluorescent dye to help doctors identify tiny cancer tumours. In their first test of the method, doctors injected patients with a mixture of the dye and the vitamin folate, which turns some tumour cells bright green. Surgeons located nearly five times as many ovarian tumours, some as small as a tenth of a millimetre, as they did using the naked eye. Doctors may also be able to use similar dyes to detect prostate and other cancers.

UNITED STATES

## Cavity Killer



A University of California, Los Angeles, microbiologist has developed a mouthwash that targets and kills a bacterium that causes cavities. That's a step up from traditional mouthwashes that kill both the cavity-causing bacteria and the good bacteria that keep your immune system healthy. The new formula wipes out only the main cavity culprit, *S. mutans*, while leaving the beneficial bacteria alone. Early tests showed that one 40-second swish of the mint-flavoured mouthwash wiped out nearly all the *S. mutans* in volunteers' mouths for at least four days. Larger clinical trials have been scheduled.

Reporting by *Regina Nuzzo*

ILLUSTRATED BY CHRISTOPH NIEMANN



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# Herbs That Control Diabetes

FROM **759 Secrets for Beating Diabetes (Reader's Digest)**

These are some herbs that have shown promise in controlling diabetes. Talk to your doctor before adding any herbal extract to your regimen, especially if it has the potential to lower your blood sugar. You may also need to check your blood sugar more often and possibly have your doctor adjust your medication dosage. If you don't see results after a month or two, stop wasting your money.

**Bitter gourd** (Hindi: *karela*). Main use: Lowering blood sugar. Typical dosage: 50 to 100ml (3 to 6 tablespoons) of the juice daily. The aptly named bitter gourd (also bitter melon) is thought to help cells use glucose more effectively and block sugar absorption in the intestine. Gastrointestinal problems are possible side effects.

**Prickly Pear Cactus** (Hindi: *nagphana*). Main use: Lowering blood sugar. Typical dosage: If you eat it as a food, aim for half cup of cooked cactus fruit a day. The ripe fruit of this cactus has been shown in some small studies to lower blood-sugar levels. If you can't get this high-fibre fruit, look for it as a juice or powder at health food stores. The fruit may possibly lower blood sugar because it contains components that work similarly to insulin.

**Bilberry** (Hindi: *bilberry*). Main use: Protecting the eyes and nerves. Typical dosage: 80 to 120mg twice a day of standardized bilberry extract. Animal studies have also suggested that bilberry may lower blood sugar.

**Fenugreek** (Hindi: *methi*). Main use: Lowering blood sugar. Typical dosage: 5 to 30 grams with each meal or 15 to 90 grams with one meal per day. These seeds have been found to lower blood sugar, increase insulin sensitivity, and reduce cholesterol, according to several animal and human studies. The effect may be partly due to the seeds' high fibre content. The seeds also contain an amino acid that appears to boost the release of insulin.

For more herbs and supplements, read the full report at: *www.rd.com/health/the-best-herbs-and-supplements-for-diabetes/*

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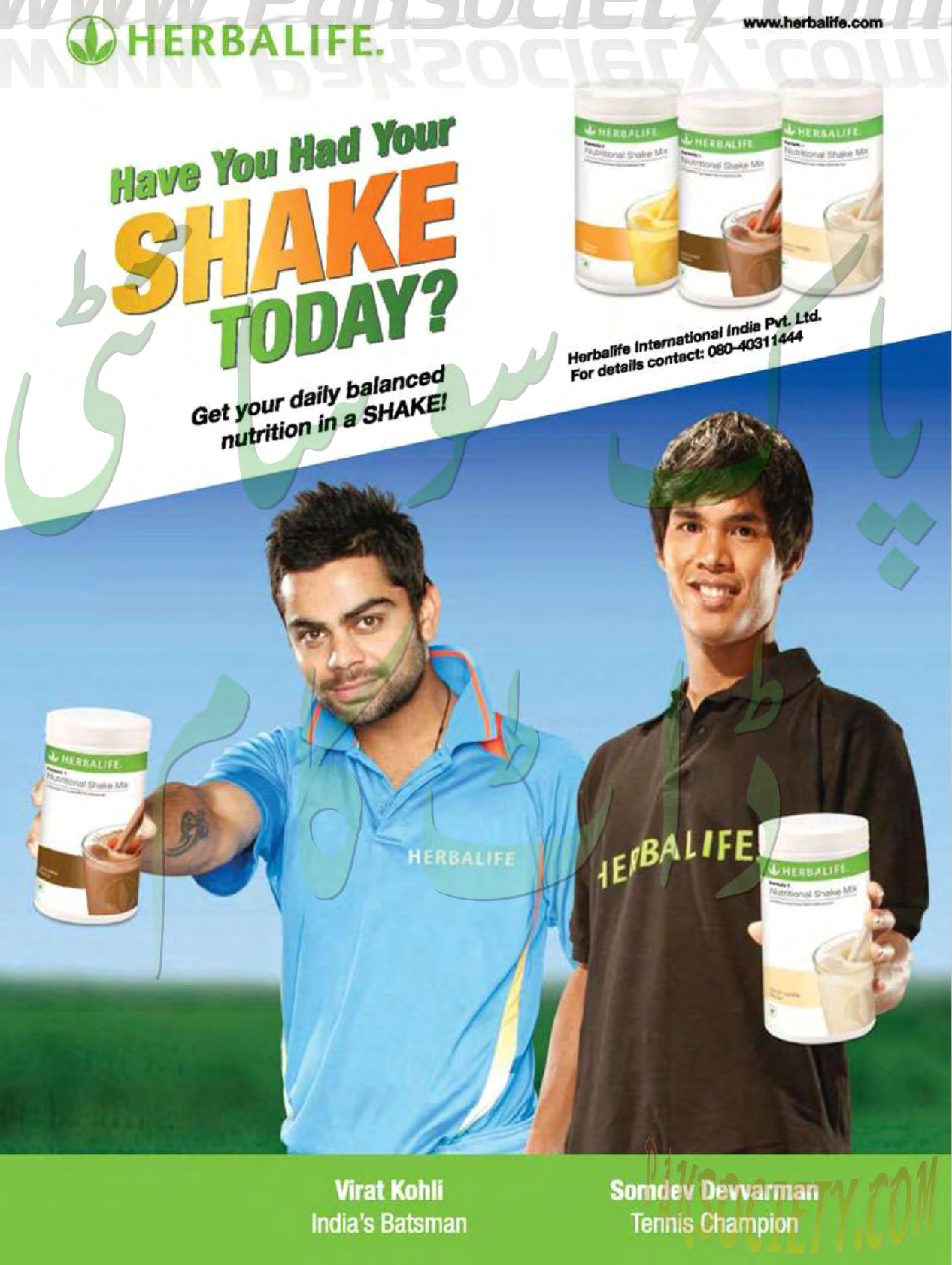


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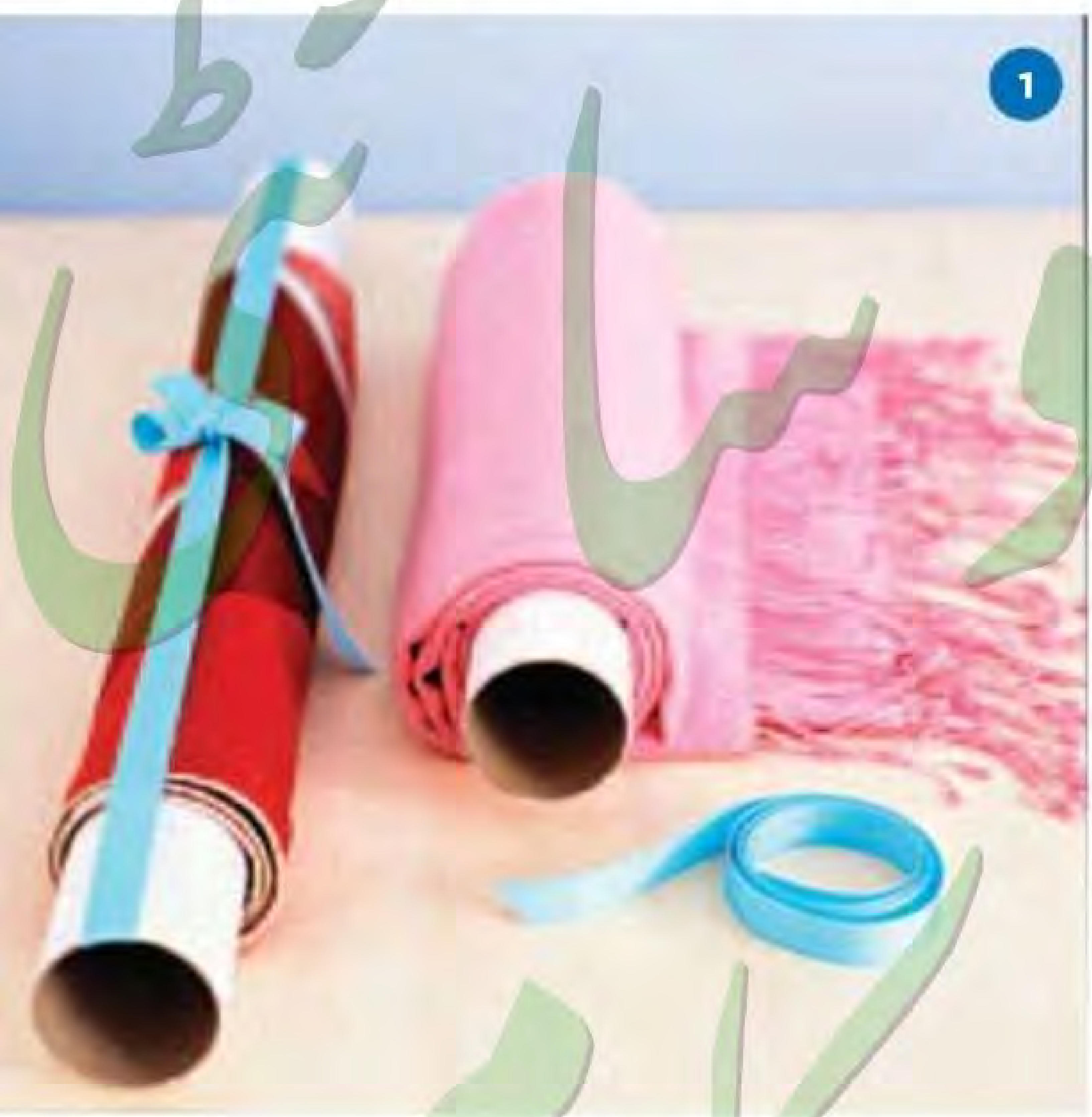
# How to Cut the Clutter

## We looked all over for the most clever spring-cleaning tips

BY ALISON CAPORIMO




**1. Roll it up.** Keep tablecloths and scarves wrinkle-free: Roll the fabric around a bare cling-film or aluminium-foil tube and tie it with a bow.

**2. Pull a plastic bag.** Stuff bags into an empty tissue box for a quick grab-and-go.

**3. Stow supplies.** Stash rubber bands and more in glass or plastic jars.

**4. Hang a crate.** Paint crates in pastel hues and hang them on a wall in the corridor. Guests can quickly store shoes inside before kicking up their feet.

Sources: *Real Simple*, *Family Handyman*, *Cosmopolitan*, and Thea's Mania blog.

1. JAMES BAIGRIE; 2. BEATRIZ DA COSTA; 3. ANTONIS ACHILLEOS; 4. COURTESY THEA'S MANIA



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4

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# Buying Wheeled Luggage?

Whether you pack for a well-planned vacation or unexpected official travel, unsuitable luggage can ruin your entire trip. This of course will never happen if you follow our suggestions:

**1. Size?** For carry-ons about 55x40x20cm is the largest size allowed, for checked baggage, the sum of its three dimensions usually is a maximum of 160cm.

**2. Weight?** Hand luggage should not exceed 3kg, 4 to 5kg for a larger suitcase.

**3. Wheels?** Larger, rubberized wheels are more comfortable, the four multi-direction spinner wheels more versatile.

**This is the one**

- Standard dimensions.
- Max. 3-5kg weight.
- Quality wheels.
- Adjustable pull handle.

**4. Material?** Fabric is lighter, while hard plastic or metal withstand blows better. (The new flexible polycarbonate material may have the advantage.)

**5. Handles?** The retractable pull handles should be free-sliding or lockable in stages and have ergonomic grips.

**6. Interior features?** Organized travellers should choose one with multiple compartments, clever dividers, interior and exterior pockets.

**CHERRY ON THE TOP**

**Protected laptop divide.**

**7. Locks?** On hard-side luggage, look for a secure key lock, on fabric ones sturdy metal zippers with lockable pulls.

**8. Protective coverings?** Over corners, edges and wheels they can enhance the longevity of the softer varieties against blows and wear caused by stairs.

**9. Colour?** Thieves tend to shun the conspicuous, bright colour suitcases—which in addition are more easy to spot on the conveyor belt.

**BONUS TIP**

**Look for luggage with Expandable packing space.**

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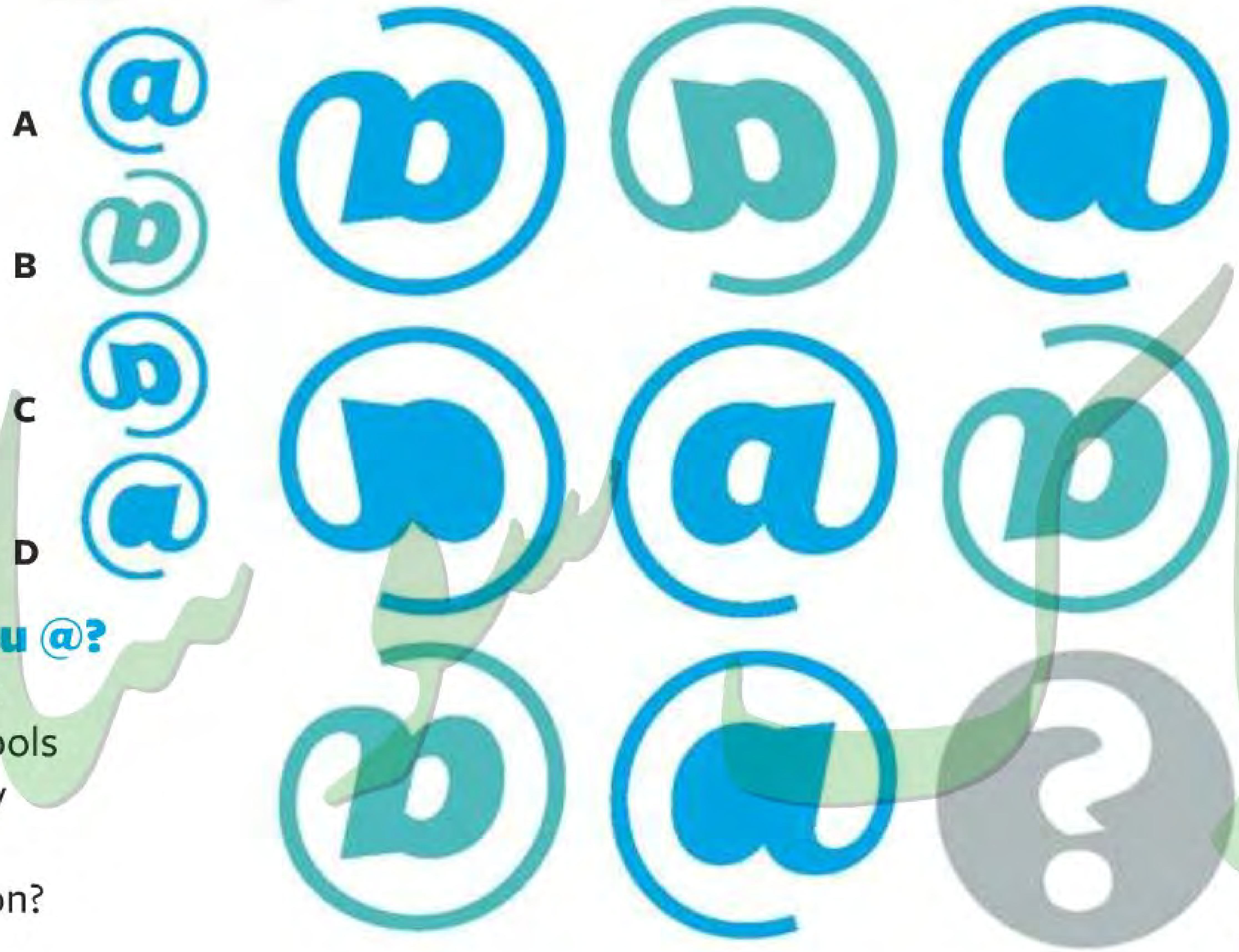
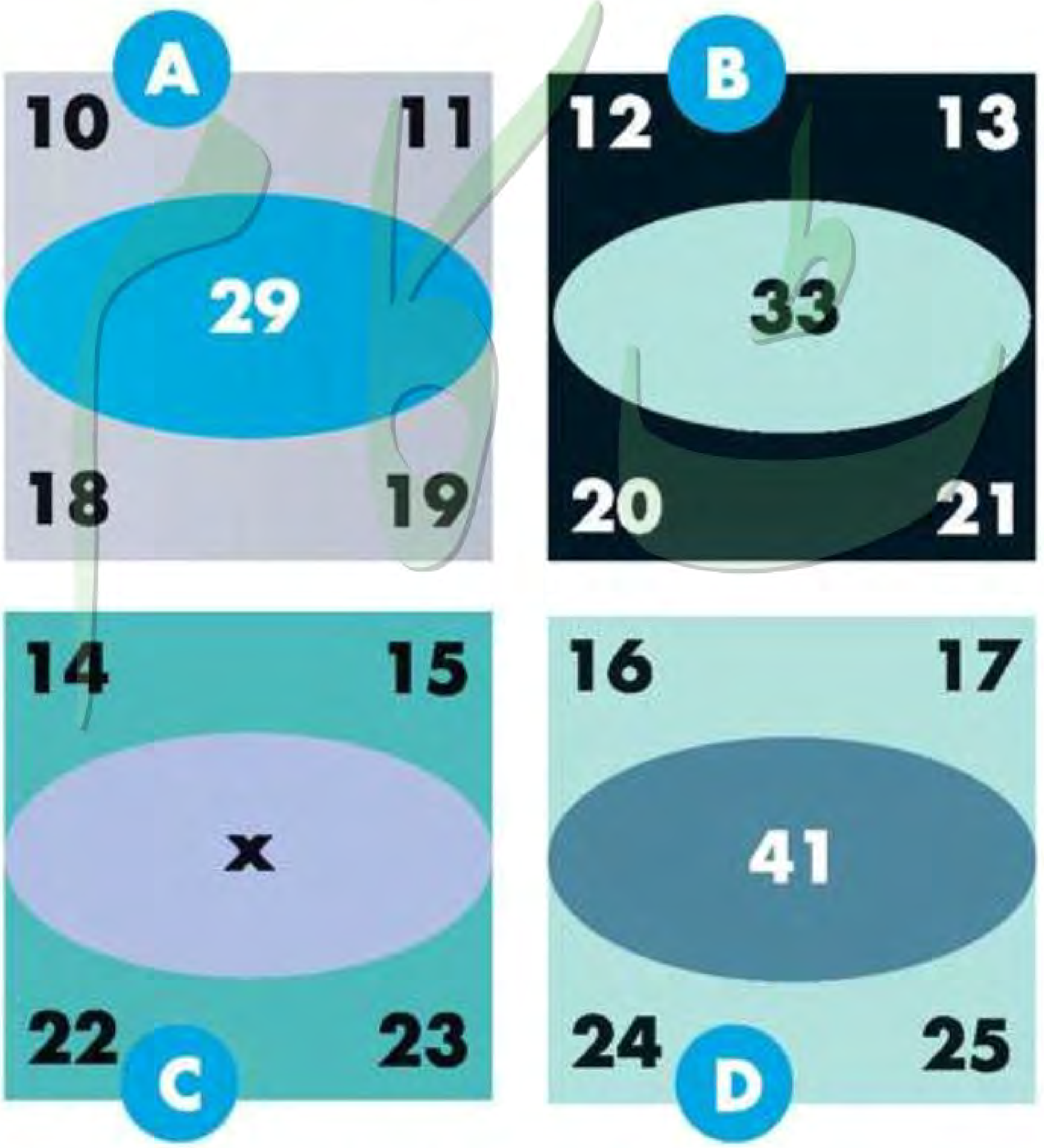
# ¡Challenge!




## Where are you @?

Can you work out which of the symbols above slots snugly into the bottom right-hand position?




## Number in the hole

Which number is missing from the x in panel C?

Solutions on page 146.



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## *Grooms*

**Pune based parents** invite proposals for fair and good-looking 29-year-old, 5'10", Kokanastha Brahmin, B.E, MBA from the UK, wealthy family.

**Tall, fair and handsome** 26-year-old, 5'8", Agarwal, living in Delhi, well educated, director of a company, well-to-do business family.

**Proposals are invited** for handsome and good-looking 34-year-old, 5'10", 96 Kuli Maratha, living in Mumbai, chartered accountant, wealthy family.

**Good-looking** 24-year-old, 5'10", cosmopolitan, living in Sagar (MP), MBA from a premier institute, successful entrepreneur, well-to-do family.

**Delhi based parents** invite proposals for 26-year-old, 5'11", Brahmin, living in Delhi, MBA, working with a leading business house, wealthy family.

**Proposals are invited** for 32-year-old, 5'10", Khatri, living in Delhi, postgraduate from a premier institute, business, well-to-do family.

## *Brides*

**Proposals are invited** for good-looking 26-year-old, 5'6", Khatri, living in New Delhi, postgraduate from Australia, financially well-off.

**Fair, beautiful and accomplished** 27-year-old, 5'3", Sikh Khatri, living in New Delhi, postgraduate from RIT, USA, well-to-do business family.

**Proposals are invited** for 29-year-old, 5'5", cosmopolitan Punjabi, living in New Delhi, C.A, Management course from London, wealthy family.

**Fair and beautiful** 23-year-old, 5'8", Sikh Khatri, living in Thane, BLS, LLB from a premier institute in Mumbai, well-to-do family.

**Attractive and accomplished** 26-year-old, 5'4", Muslim Khan, living in Mumbai, MBA from a premier institute, wealthy business family.

**Proposals are invited** for fair and good-looking 22-year-old, 5'3", Arora, living in Mumbai, BE from a premier institute, wealthy family.

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# Studio

FROM HIS "PORTRAIT OF THE VILLAGE" SERIES
BY SUNIL BAMBAL
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 66 x 66 CM, 2010

**Combining elements of landscape and portraiture, Sunil Bambal achieves this cryptically executed work of art. Drawing from the mood and structure of the villages surrounding his native Chikhli in Maharashtra, he has constructed the faces of a man and a woman—you'll find them if you took a second look—implying that they are the basic building blocks of a community. Bambal, 32, trained at Sir J.J. School of Art, Mumbai.**



Brooke Bond TAJ MAHAL
Connoisseur series by Wah Taj!
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